frankie

for the creative and curious

frankie
press

ISSUE 112
MAR/APR 2023
AUS: $12.95 INC GST
NZ: $13.95 INC GST

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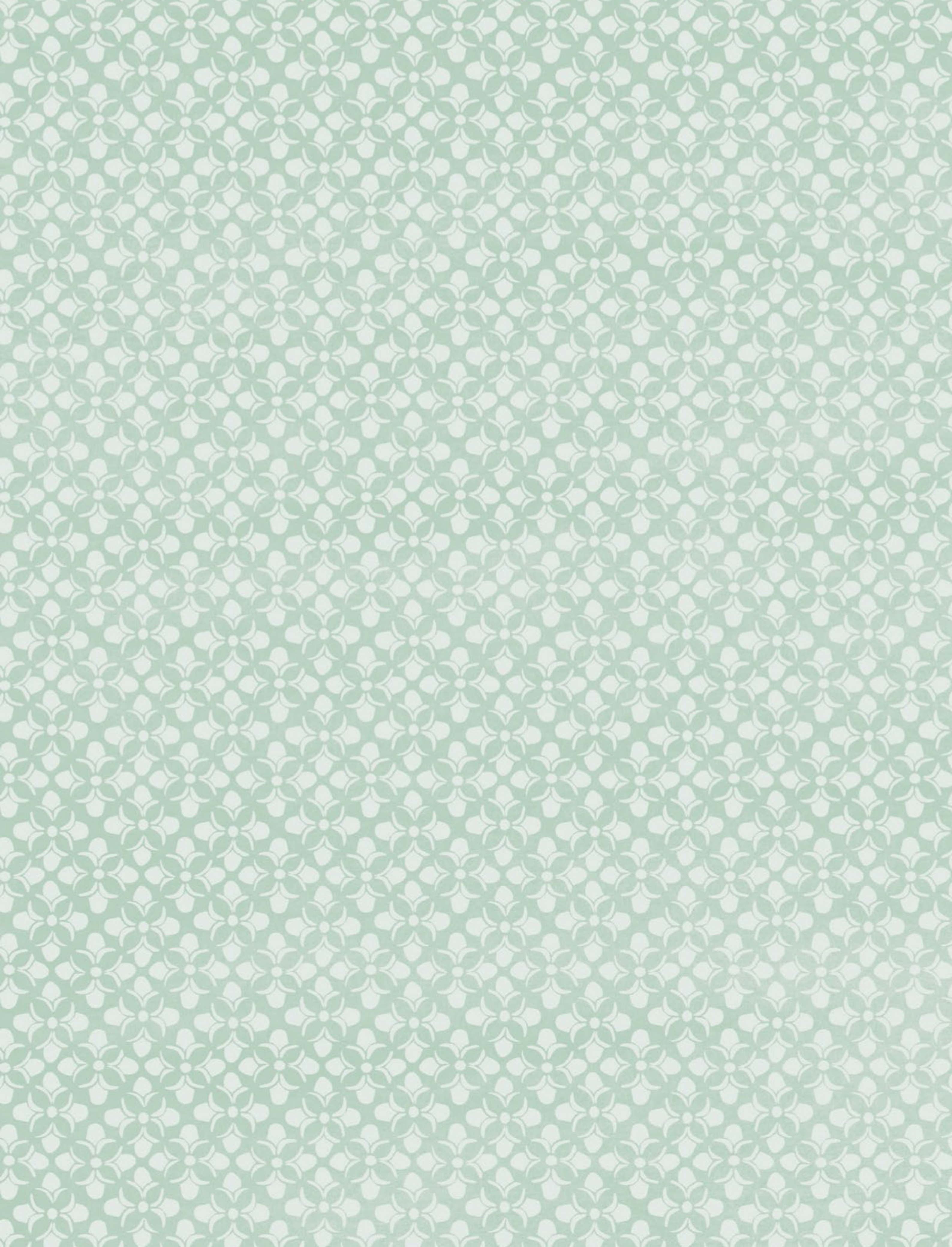

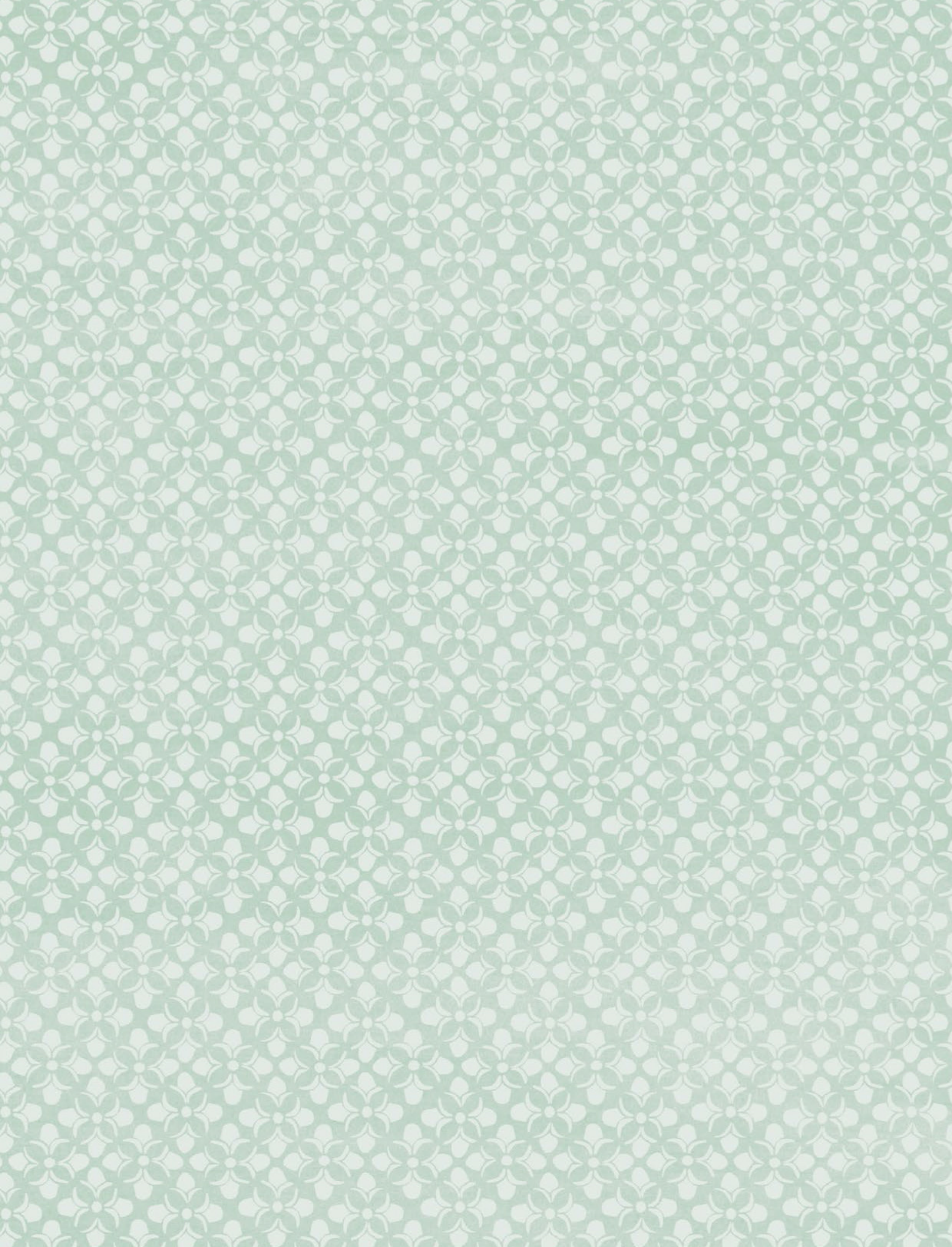

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ISSN 14497794

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Wathaurong, Taungurong and Dja Dja Wurrung of the Kulin Nation.

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Proudly Printed
In Australia

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internships/work experience: unfortunately frankie is unable to facilitate any work experience or internship programs

frankie magazine is proudly published 6 times a year by frankie press, a division of nextmedia pty ltd,
2 craine street, south melbourne vic 3205

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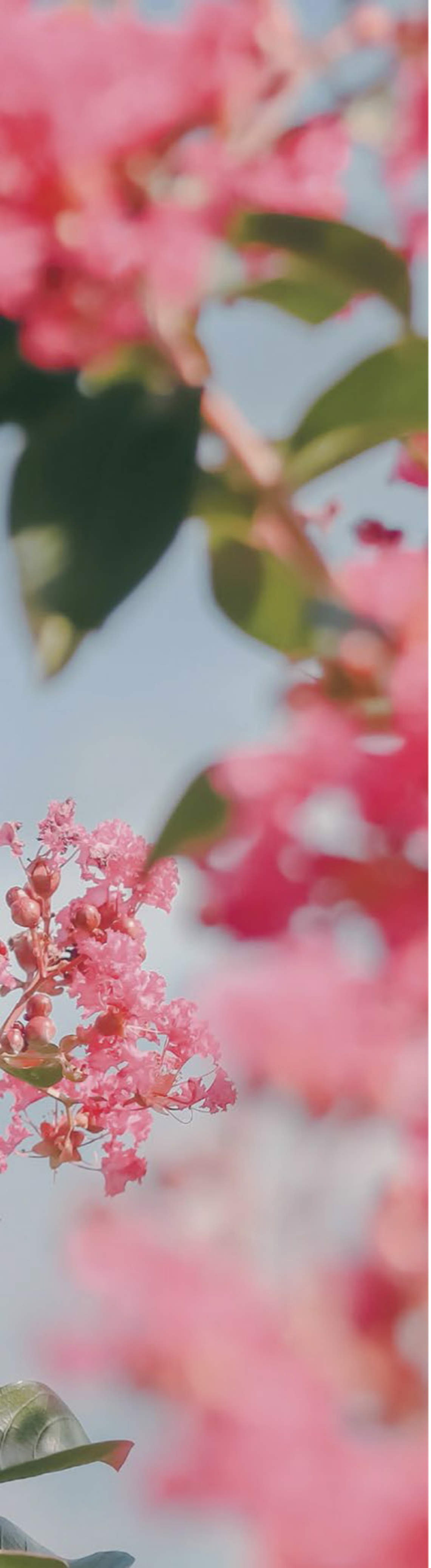
STATUS ANXIETY.

Ordinary *Pleasures.*

Autumn - Winter *2023*



lately we've been thinking: consistency is overrated.

As kids, we're asked to define ourselves as if our identities are set in stone: what our favourite colour is, who our best friend is, what job we aspire to. Of course, we grow older and find that our goals, the things we like and want – even our fundamental beliefs – can change completely.

There's nothing wrong with changing your mind (you don't have to be a unicornologist whose favourite colour is yellow forever) – in fact, after chatting to the folks in this issue, we think it's pretty healthy.

Sometimes it's hard to leave the desires of your past self behind (page 20), but embracing new possibilities is what makes life exciting. You might wake up one day and decide to start a flower farm (page 37) or completely ditch your first career for beer brewing (page 122), although it had never been part of the plan. You're entitled to reflect on your long-held stances and come to new conclusions (page 28), or simply decide that your artistic style is ready to evolve (page 22).

Why confine yourself to being just one thing? Whether you're making big life decisions or just contemplating a new hairstyle, we reckon it's heaps more fun to surprise yourself.

xx Emma and the frankie team

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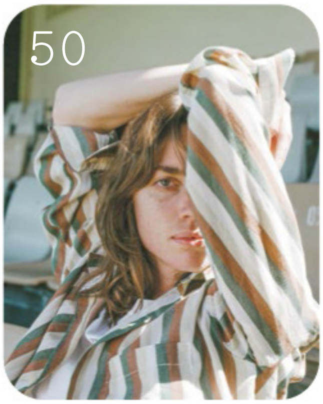
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in defence of gossip

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dear frankie

GET ON YOUR SOAPBOX – WE DON'T MIND AT ALL.

LETTERS@FRANKIE.COM.AU

Dear frankie, I was thrilled to read "Page not found" in issue 111. I work at a library in a small town in Canada and have been unplugged for over 10 months now. One day it occurred to me: I am surrounded by the best type of content (books, of course). I went cold turkey on the apps and have never looked back since. Many friends ask if everything is all right, "What happened?" etc. when I say I am not on the platforms anymore. But I also notice that when friends call or text me these days, we have more meaningful conversations. It is wonderful to hear more people are choosing to be unplugged and living for the here and now. Thank you for all the wonderful stuff you do. *Nithasha*

. . . .

Dear frankie, I'm French but visited Australia 13 years ago – that's where I discovered you. I brought the magazine back to France and a few years later I subscribed. Thanks to frankie, my winters are shorter. Here in Brittany, it is cold and grey from November to March, so I escape by reading your articles on fashion, life and always-fascinating, offbeat artists. Today my teenagers also read it. The calendar accompanies me every day of the year! You are my sunshine. *Love always, Alexandra*

. . . .

Kia ora frankie, I have been a reader and a fan for probably 20 years – I have lost count! I have noticed in recent issues the increased visibility of First Nations people in the magazine, not only in the ads and on the acknowledgements page, but also in the articles. Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Australia have a tonne to do when it comes to breaking down racism, and I think this is a good first step. Kia kaha! *Gretchen*

Dear frankie, I am in love. Your full-year wall planner has been a lifesaver, two years running. My mum, not aware that my heart belongs to your wall planner, and yours ONLY, bought me a different one as a Christmas present last year. I gently told her it wouldn't be used in my room. We had to quickly find a place to hang it and decided on the back of the toilet door (iconic). I think she never truly got over that, because I was in Sydney for a week and came back to my beloved wall planner gone. I have not confronted her in fear she has just tucked it away in a cupboard. Thankfully, there is last issue's planner, so my bare wall will not be bare much longer. *All my love, Beth*

. . . .

Dearest frankie, I began reading you two years ago in the midst of lockdown – I'd persuade my family to let me go on the daily supermarket trip so I could swipe the latest issue. frankie offered me a break from the bad news that I'd read all day, and I could instead let my mind relax. Fast forward to post-lockdown and I am currently completing my uni exams, safe in the knowledge that I can escape into issue 110 each night after reading about Australian politics (riveting stuff, I know). *Thanks for being you, Zara*

. . . .

Dear frankie, You have been in my tote bag since I was 17 years old – you were a paper-bound dream full of pretty pictures for my wall and stories to read before biology. Back then, I thought my dream was to become a teacher, but alas I am 22 soon and changing my degree for the third time. I recently read your 2018

Photo Chris Weiher

interview with the talented Ngaio Parr. In my mind, my creative path had to be straightforward, but hearing Ngaio explain how her path was "very curvy" put things into perspective. I start my Bachelor of Arts soon and hope to ignite many passions. There will be an article about me in your magazine one day, in the tote bag of another 17-year-old. *Love, Zoe*

……

Dear frankie, I found myself with nothing to do at the start of my day today, so I thought I'd try my hand at writing an article, just for fun. After years of reading frankie, I thought I had a good idea of the tone I wanted to hit. Now, after trying for several hours, all I have to say is, good gravy! How do you make it look so easy? I have a newfound appreciation for everything I read in your pages, and your articles are proving to be a great inspiration as I rediscover my creative-writing muscles. *Keep it up, Anna xox*

……

Dear frankie, It can be easy to take our loved ones for granted – the article on Marieke Hardy and Emilie Zoey Baker in issue 109 was a powerful reminder of this. It's important to let our loved ones know how much we care about them while they're still with us. My mum, who has been diagnosed with dementia, is slowly being robbed of her memories, and I want to make sure she knows how much she means to me before she forgets. Thank you, frankie, for reminding me that now is the perfect time to tell her how much I love her. *Natalie*

Dear frankie, Since I immigrated to Australia 10 months ago, you have been my safe haven. To me, you have become this judgement-free friend who feels like a warm embrace. I wait impatiently for every issue. When I finally have it in my hands, I love to run straight home and make it a special moment. My journey hasn't been easy so far, but having you has made it less scary and lonely as I see bits of myself in every story. Thank you for being there. *Love, Noémie xx*

……

THE LETTER OF THE ISSUE WINS A FRESSKO CORE 1L INFUSER FLASK IN SAGE, RRP $89.90 AU.MADEBYFRESSKO.COM

Dear frankie, I'm writing to make a request – no, to beg of you. See, the very first thing I do when I open your magazine is frantically flip through the colourful, buttery pages in desperate search for one particular feature: the road test. There's just something about those tiny bite-sized segments, the colourful and whimsical illustrations, the chatty tone riddled with hilarious and sometimes unfortunate experiences, the reviews I didn't know I needed. I breathe a sigh of relief every time I find it in each issue. So, dear frankie, I beg of you: please never retire this old reliable. It's my favourite thing since sliced bread. Hey, maybe that's your next product to review! *Soph xx* ✽

made by
Fressko

gone troppo

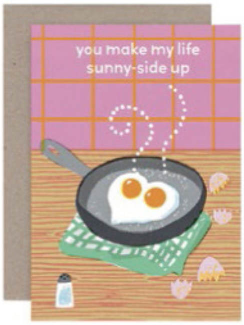
Through eye-catching graphics on hemp tees and jumpsuits, the new collaboration from **AFENDS x House of Darwin** invites us to "return to Earth". What exactly are they trying to tell us? Well, basically, not to go bananas and lose sight of the important stuff, like how to care for Country. Both brands aim to use their creative powers to highlight the wealth of Indigenous knowledge in environmental conservation, and they're backing it up by donating a portion of profits to the Karrkad Kanjdji Trust, which works with First Nations rangers to preserve parts of Arnhem Land. See more at **afends.com**

step right up

If your dining chair could talk, it would ask that you kindly refrain from dragging it to the kitchen cupboard, only to stand on its delicate seat as you rummage around for that bread maker you last used five years ago. Instead, you could invest in a snazzy, fit-for-purpose stool by **Merri At Home** ($380), handmade from sustainable pine and designed to be passed down to future generations who, like you, cannot reach the top shelf. **merriathome.com.au**

pasta pleasures

While we don't believe in a 'correct' serving size for pasta (as with garlic, you measure that with your heart), we do concede that estimating spaghetti portions for guests can get confusing. That's where this **Fog Linen Work** pasta measure ($35 from **gingerfinch.com.au**) comes in handy – pass your dry noodles through the holes that have been numbered accordingly, and there you have it.



you're eggcellent

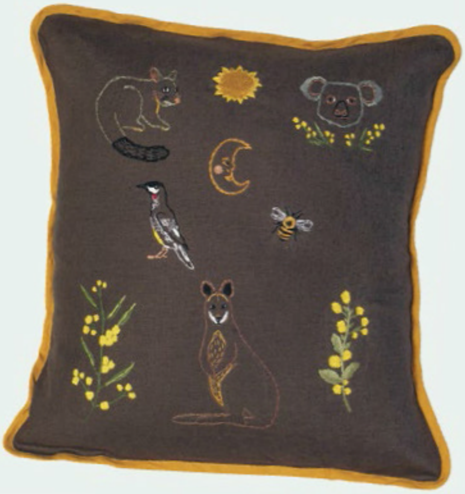
Sunny-side up eggs are the superior googs. Why else would they have such a cheerful name? Nobody likes feeling scrambled. Being poached doesn't sound pleasant, either. But sunny? Sublime. The folks at **AHD PAPER CO.** must agree, since they've immortalised the eggs on swish greeting cards ($6.50 each at **ahdpaperco.com**). For a chance to score one of six, head to **frankie.com.au/win**

myriam swim

Soaked, stretched, wrung and hung – our togs may be small, but boy are they mighty. You could say the same about the team at **MYRIAM**. Designer **Miho Arai** was a lingerie designer in Tokyo for seven years before setting up her swimwear line in Newcastle, and now, along with one local maker, she turns out comfy, quality cossies in sweet prints. Each collection builds on the last, and is intended to match with older styles. **myriam-swim.com**

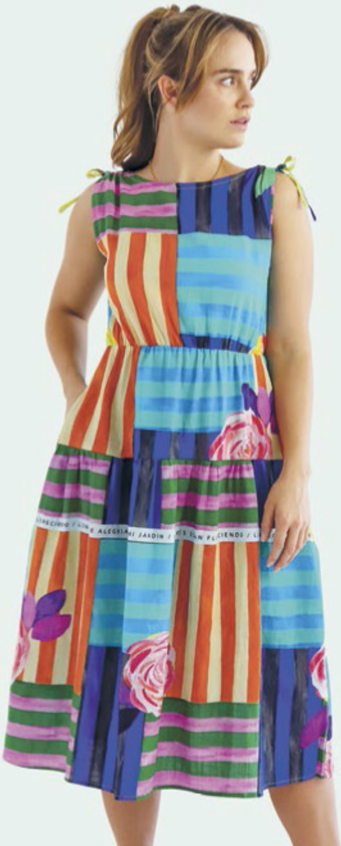
this or that with…
elizabeth m. drummond

Early mornings or late nights? I love the idea of early mornings more than late nights, but I'm often more creative and productive at night. It's really annoying. **One-off gigs or tours?** Tours. My idea of heaven is supporting a great band that I love and get along with. You get to go on stage early and there's minimal pressure (provided the tour is planned well). Tours are insanely funny and everyone turns into the silliest version of themselves. **Vinyl or digital?** I love the physical process of buying vinyl and the ritual of playing a record. It gives a record a tangible 'moment'. But digital is just so bloody easy, isn't it? **Cities or country towns?** I love the city for periods of time, but after a while I truly despise it. I'm always drawn to nature and solitude. My parents live in a beautiful country town, so the country feels familiar and homey to me. **Happy songs or sad songs?** Both. This morning I was listening to Elliott Smith and now I'm listening to MUNA's new album. I'm emotionally confused. **Love or friendship?** Love. But what is love? I don't know. Friendship is nice, but that just equals love for me. **Hot or cold weather?** I want hot weather when it's cold and I want cold weather when it's hot. It's the age-old problem: I want what I can't have. I'm a total shithead! I'll never be satisfied!



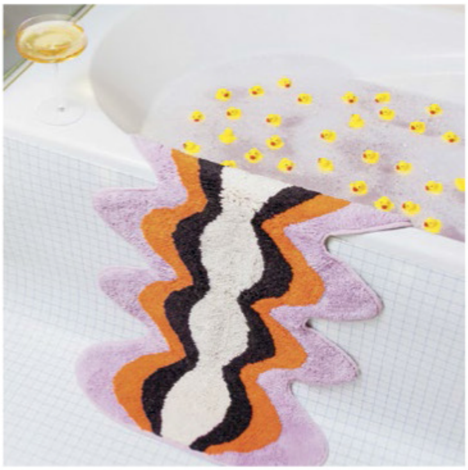
soft and fluffy

This one-of-a-kind cushion sports three of our favourite things: embroidery, native wildlife and golden wattle. If you, too, consider this to be a design trifecta, send thanks to **Natalie Hrymakowski,** the Ballarat-based illustrator and maker of this special object (available at **nyattski.com** for $230)



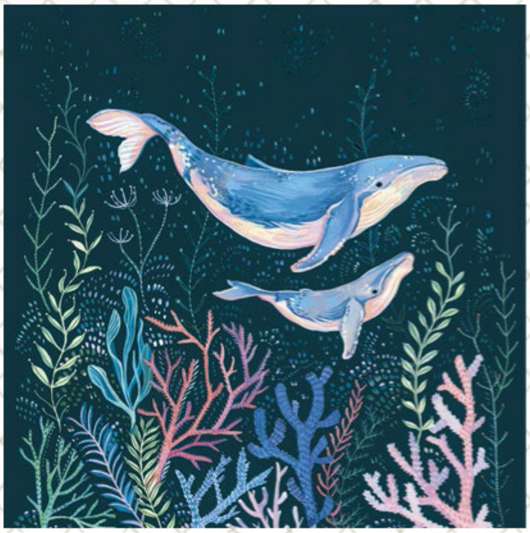
pretty in print

Oh hi there. Do you need to skip from weekend market to sunset drinks to garden party? **Frank and Dollys** happens to have made a fun frock with exactly these activities in mind. It's called the Flores dress, and comes complete with wee bow ties on the shoulders and all-important pockets (huzzah!). It's yours for $209, if you please. **frankanddollys.com**



for your feet

We'll never tire of admiring plankton's alien shapes and colours. Those weird little guys are the chillest of the chill, just drifting about in the ocean, keeping the marine food chain intact. Clearly, Barcelona home-goods brand **Tarta Gelatina** shares our fondness for the wondrous creatures – they've named this statement-making bath mat the 'Plankton', and you can get your tootsies on it by heading to **pinkysstore.com** with $85 at the ready.



get to know our cover artist, clara mcallister

Hi Clara, tell us about how you became an artist. I've been drawing and painting since I was able to hold a pencil. My father is an artist and for most of the time he worked from home, so I was very much influenced by him, just by watching his process. I also had access to his art materials and that helped me a lot in my development as a young artist. **How did you land on your magical style?** I don't know why, but I've always been very drawn to magical elements and the supernatural in art, even though I'm a very skeptical person in general. I guess I find this style aesthetically pleasing. **What tools do you use to create?** My favourite medium right now is gouache. **Does where you live inspire your work?** I live in São Paulo, which is a big city in Brazil with a lot of concrete and not much nature around to inspire me. I get much more of my inspiration when I get to travel to other places. **What's your favourite animal to draw?** It depends on my mood. Right now, I'm obsessed with drawing birds. **What's your dream project?** I have a lot of dream projects. Something that I would love to do right now is to design a homewares collection with my signature. **Where can we see more from you?** I always post new artwork and my painting process on Instagram at @claramcallister. My website is claramcallister.com.

sunny sips

It's only in recent years that Noosa welcomed its first distillery. We can only assume that locals were too busy soaking up the sun, sand and surf to start concocting tipples (understandable) – that is, until **Noosa Gin** came along. This cheeky drop is created with tropical botanicals including Queensland sugarcane, cassia bark and green mango. Yum! $69.95 from **noosaginco.com**

SLEEP THIEF

rest up

If you're starting to doze off as you read this, you might have a sleep thief in your life – you know, those eating, crying, pooing machines who hold us hostage until they decide we're no longer cool enough to hang out with. The only thing we can do about it is dress them in cute playsuits. This one's $42 from **oliveandthecaptain.com**

glass animals

We can't say we've ever sipped from a cup and thought, "Hmm, this is missing a tiny ornamental critter." But oh, how things changed when we clapped eyes upon these **Ichendorf Milano** Animal Farm tumblers ($33 each from **mrwares.com**). And now there is a tiny hedgehog-shaped hole in our hearts.

eloise panetta scrunchies

Luxury isn't just fancy cars and designer handbags. Sometimes it's tying your mane back using the softest of scrunchies – one made from 100 per cent naturally dyed silk, that promises to caress your locks and prevent any snagging, frizz, breakage or kinks. Where can one acquire such niceness? Why, at **eloisepanetta.com**, where a pack of two goes for $50.

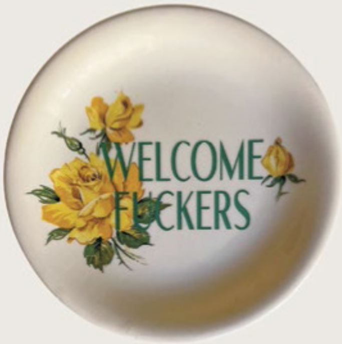
frills and thrills

There are threads you do your grocery shopping in, then there are threads you reserve specifically for a "Wuthering Heights"-style moment. **Havilah Arendse** of Kiwi label **Havilah** makes the latter kind of clothing: voluminous, celebratory dresses and dramatic ruffled shirts that make you want to throw your limbs about (because life's too short not to play Kate Bush on full blast). To acquire one of Havilah's creations, head to **havilahlabel.com**, but be prepared to sit tight – all designs are made to order.

LIP BALM
Vanilla
NOOSA BASICS

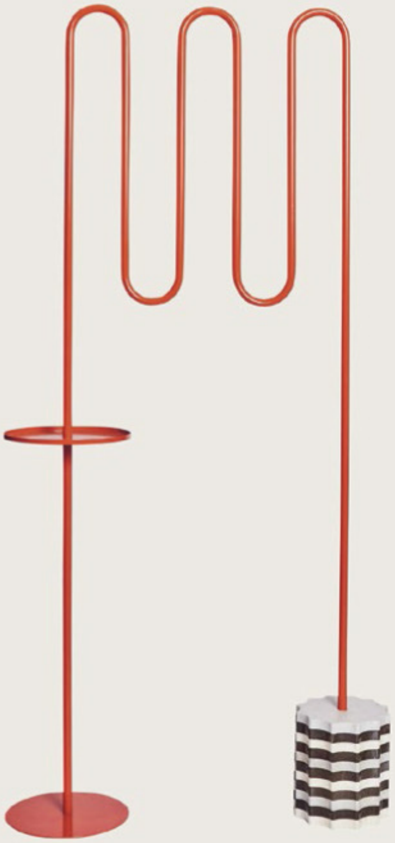
noosa basics

Unless you've done a full audit of your cosmetics drawer (in which case, good on you!), it's easy to forget just how much plastic packaging exists there. All those tiny tubes, pots and bottles really do add up. Thankfully, **Noosa Basics** is providing an alternative – its $9.95 lip balms come in biodegradable paper tubes. Nice one! **noosabasics.com**



bitchin' kitsch

Live, love, laugh, this is not. Friends **Amy Campbell** and **Loretta Sanders** (aka **Flossy Homewares**) spend their time combing Brissie's op shops in search of the perfect one-off object to upcycle. Using their sassy, sweary sense of humour, fusty old frames, mirrors and nanna plates become cool home décor. Did we mention that they have a penchant for Dolly Parton paraphernalia? Because there's that, too. See more at **flossyhomewares.myshopify.com**



real non-real

If only real-life interior decorating were like *The Sims*. Then we could simply input a cheat code, make it rain money and build the modernist home of our wildest fantasies. In reality, we're sitting slack-jawed in front of our screens, drooling over **Real Non-Real's** Formosa rack ($2,880 from **shop.craft.org.au**), which is made from repurposed marble bench tops and hand-bent chrome. How dreamy.

PHOTO **CHRISTINA MISHELL**

just add bisexual soda

Calling all bisexual baking fiends: show off your pride (of the culinary and queer varieties) by dangling this enamel charm from your neck. Inspired by McKenzie's Bi-Carb Soda, the necklace is the work of queer Sydney-based illustrator **Amy Blue** and we think it's rather rad. Nab one by gathering up $25 and popping on to **amyblueillustration.com**

my favourite things with… ashli

Favourite artist at the moment? UNCLE WAFFLES! I saw her live a few weeks back. She's so cool and her confidence is crazy. **Favourite track from your new EP?** I love "King St". It brings me back to a time when I would catch the train to Newtown every weekend just to walk up and down King Street while eating ice-cream with my friends. **Favourite childhood memory?** For most of my childhood, I grew up right next to the Jersey Shore. My mum would take me to the beach often and I would ride my bike on the boardwalk. **Favourite song to get a party started?** "Party" by Beyonce. **Favourite place to write music?** Whether I'm writing in the studio or in my room, I love sitting on the floor. I don't really know why. Maybe it grounds me and makes me feel free. **Favourite thing about your hometown?** In New Jersey it's Corsi's Pizza and in Penrith it's the Penrith Panthers. **Favourite way to shake writer's block?** Coffee and a walk. This is the best way to release tension and reflect. I often get writer's block from putting too much pressure on myself to write, so a coffee and walking helps me relax. **Favourite gig you've played?** My first headline show at Phoenix Central Park. The team there is amazing and it was incredible hearing my songs live in such a stunning space. **Favourite artist you've worked with?** Moonboy. He produced and co-wrote the majority of my EP. Working with him was such an honour. He is incredibly kind and talented. **Favourite comfort food?** Mac and cheese or anything Jamaican. **Favourite piece of advice you've received?** Trust God, be yourself.

bedazzled butts

Are these wee lasses partaking in nude interpretive dancing? Or perhaps some synchronised swimming? Either way, they appear to be having a jolly good time and we'd like to introduce them to our lobes. If you'd also enjoy some cheeky dangles, swing past **lizlaustudio.com** with $41, or enter the draw to win one of two pairs at **frankie.com.au/win**

a rad bag

We'll keep this short and sweet. Melbourne designer **Charlene Caday** of **Char Studio** is all kinds of awesome (she won the 2020 Good Stuff fashion award, after all). Charlene has always stuck to her mantra of slow, considered making, and her Edith floral bag, with its subtle stitched flowers, adds a bit of magic to the everyday. $125 from **char.studio**

the tiny home

If someone had presented this stackable wooden doll house to the kid versions of us, we would have squealed in delight. Heck – we'd probably have the same reaction today. The house (and furniture!) comes as a kit, so setting it up can double as a rainy-day DIY project. $230 from **huisjedesign.com**

aspirational activities

We tend to start our days slumped over in a dark kitchen, while bits of eye goo flake off our faces and into our coffee. We'd much prefer to kick off mornings with jewel-encrusted bagels and daisy tea, though. For now, the closest we'll get to that is by completing this 1000-piece Rise & Shine puzzle by **Piecework**, which you can pick up from **ithika.com.au** for $80.

six questions with... automatic

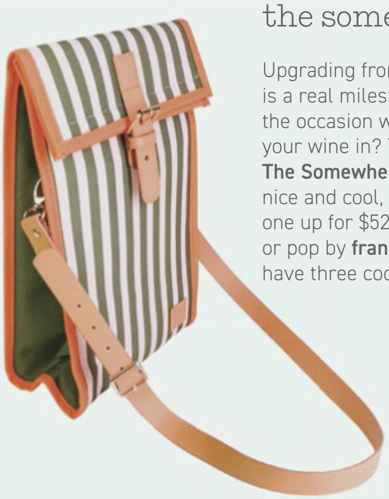
How'd you all meet? Halle Saxon: I met Lola at a music festival in 2014 and I met Izzy in line for the bathroom at a party, where she helped me use Find My iPhone for the first time. **What are the best and worst aspects of the LA music scene? HS:** Worst aspects have to do with this whole hierarchy, which breeds social climbing and fakeness. Being seen at this place or that – it's exhausting. Best aspects are that there are plenty of like-minded individuals who see through that as well. **Izzy Glaudini:** LA is a sprawling city with a lot of mid-sized/smaller venues for bands to play. There's probably a show every night, and we don't take that for granted. **How did you find your sound? IG:** I don't think we had a choice in our sound in the beginning. It started as a total lack of technique, combined with a desire to copy our musical favourites. **How do you feel about using music to explore meaty topics? HS:** If it's something that comes naturally to you and you want to express it, then you should. **IG:** Music can be about a personal inner world, or an external, more overtly political one. I don't believe in rules for creativity: people can write from whatever place they want. It's hard to ignore climate change and the rise of neo-fascism, though – at a certain point, these things intervene on your 'personal' artistic perspective. **What's your preferred way to write a song? HS:** In the practice space with Lola and Izzy, and within 15 minutes something cool happens and the song just pours out. **Do you have any tour rituals? HS:** Bring a book, leave it in the bottom of my suitcase and never open it.

feeling catty

Ring-a-ding-ding! Just like your neighbourhood kitty with the jingly collar, this **SUCK UK** bike bell makes its presence known loud and clear. If you're a cat-loving cyclist who values road safety (or grinds their teeth at pesky pedestrians walking in the bike lane) you might like to grab $20 and pedal over to **shop.until.au**

honest gum

Here's something to chew on: plastic can be found in most chewing gums. This fact gave gum enthusiast **Marie Pallas** the heebie-jeebies, which is why she launched **Honest Gum**. The Melbourne brand makes its chewies from chicle – a tree sap – and keeps them free from plastics. For more, head to **honestgum.com.au** or swing past **frankie.com.au/win** – we're giving away four variety packs.



the somewhere co.

Upgrading from goon sacks to bottled vino is a real milestone, so why not celebrate the occasion with a schmick bag to carry your wine in? This striped beauty from **The Somewhere Co.** will keep your bubbles nice and cool, too. If you dig it, you can pick one up for $52 from **thesomewhereco.com**, or pop by **frankie.com.au/win**, where we have three coolers up for grabs.

ornamental as anything

Much to the chagrin of some, Crocs have been fashionable for a while now. But resistance to these comfy shoes is futile, particularly when creatives like **Marina Lespérance Lopez** (aka **LLOMA**) come up with such cute ways to personalise them. Her ceramic Croc charms – inspired by vintage cake designs – start at around $16 for one, or can be purchased as a full set (they also double as magnets). **lloma.ca**

cosy up

When it gets to this time in the year, after one too many hot nights spent googling "how to stay cool with no air conditioning", we start desperately yearning for that crisp autumn air. Oh how lovely it would be to watch the leaves fall, a soft blanket draped over our shoulders, hot chocolate in hand. **The Tartan Blanket Co.'s** big collection of recycled wool blankets ($160 a pop) isn't helping our hankering for the chilly season, either. If you, like us, are ready to embrace blanket weather, head to **au.tartanblanketco.com**

illuminoodle

No, you're not staring at the corner of a teenage boy's bedroom, and this isn't a white orb sitting atop a pile of instant noodles – it's actually a ceramic lamp. The unconventional light fixture pays tribute to the humble nood (a food that singlehandedly got us through uni) and can be acquired for roughly 202 bucks from **siup.studio**

a helping hand

Sometimes our paws need a little extra nourishment (it's only fair after all the COVID-induced scrubbing we've put them through). **Ena's** hand treatment is packed with natural ingredients that soothe and hydrate, helping your mitts get back to tip-top shape. $18.50 from **enaproducts.com.au**

ON MY WAY TO
DESTROY EVERYTHING

the cat on the hat

God's biggest mistake was giving moggies ears instead of horns; as every cat owner can attest, felines are the spawn of Beelzebub. Here's just a smattering of weird shit they do: lick your head while you're sleeping, knock over every object you own (for kicks), completely ignore you. In summary: this hat from **stayhomeclub.com** ($38) says it all, really.

get clippy

If you spent your early years pinning up posters of Freddie Prinze Jr and watching *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*, there's a good chance that **CHUNKS** hair clips will have you feeling instantly nostalgic. The Seattle-based brand launched in 2019 and is reviving some of the most fun, playful accessories of our pre-teen years. If you're into it, you'll find CHUNKS stocked at Pinky's Store, Preston Apothecary and Cat Street Store in Victoria; Hands in Sydney and at **nookbrisbane.com**

a chinwag with… sandy hsu

How do you hope your music makes people feel? Hopefully they feel represented or connected to the feelings that I write about in my songs. I hope it encourages people to feel a little more introspective; a little more seen. **What led to the harp being featured so prominently in your music?** The harp is such an exquisite and ancient instrument. It's the sound of dreams and fantasy, which are strong themes in the record. I'm just in awe of its sound. **What do you get up to when you're not making music?** I work full-time between two arts institutions and can usually be found swanning around galleries, having picnics if the weather is nice, reading books, grocery shopping, going to the cinema and doing menial house chores. **Do you have any secret talents or hobbies?** I can back-squat 90kg. Not sure if that is a secret talent, but I have somehow become someone whose gym practice is now their hobby. **What do you listen to when you're relaxing?** Comfort and relaxation to me is Mazzy Star and Vashti Bunyan. Recently, I have been revisiting the latest HTRK album *Rhinestones*, as I saw them play live just the other week. Also, *Windswept Adan* is a beautiful album by Ichiko Aoba that gets a lot of play from me when I'm trying to conjure relaxation. **Where do you feel most creative?** In my bedroom, with my books and all my things. And also outside in nature, swimming, walking and looking.

big baby

Sooner or later, we all come to the tragic realisation that no one – not even those with a fancy title, your mum or cool Aunt Greta – actually knows what the heck they're doing. We're all walking around, pretending to understand recycling, crypto, taxes and pét nat. And this t-shirt ($48 at **tender-ghost.com**) sees right through us.

troll alert

Pop-culture nostalgia has been rife in recent years, and has led to plenty of trashy reboots and overpriced merch. But for every soulless cash grab, there's a hidden gem, like these excellent troll doll earrings from **Screaming Jewellery**. They'll set you back around $226 at **screamingjewellery.com**

plaid and simple

If you want to look like you've spent a balmy day lying in a field of flowers, direct your attention to this plaid playsuit by **Kindling**, which has been adorned with a smattering of embroidered daisies. If you're dreaming of owning one, rustle up $225 and head to **kindling.com.au**

MAKE GOOD
MAKING HAPPY THINGS
FREE FREE TIME TIME
Let's Picnic
ANDIAMO

be a tag dag

Do you periodically empty your bank account at the fabric store? Did you give your sewing machine a name? Do you spend entire weekends whipping up something new to wear? If you answered yes to all three, these sewing labels are for you. Designed by **Sue-Ching Lascelles**, these woven tags add a touch of fun to your self-made creations. A pack of six goes for $10 at **makinghappythings.bigcartel.com** ✽

how to make your cat like you

JAMES SHACKELL KNOWS THE WAY TO A MOGGIE'S HEART.

Every cat owner remembers their first time – the first time your cat voluntarily crawls onto your lap and settles down like a furry hot water bottle. It's a sign that you're a fundamentally good and trustworthy person, rather than the selfish and cynical arsehole you suspect yourself to be. A small mammal who's sort of your prisoner loves you, and that's all that matters in the world. So, the big question: how do you ~~trick a cat into loving you~~ earn a cat's affection?

PLAY HARD TO GET Cats aren't just smaller, cuter dogs. They're more like Tinder dates. Treat them with reciprocal indifference, and you'll probably make them curious. Eventually they'll text you back (metaphorically speaking). On the other hand, if you come on all clingy and demonstrative, at least on the first date, you're more likely to freak your cat out. Take things slow and build trust. Make offhand remarks about seeing other cats on the side.

GIVE THEM SPACE For new kittens, it helps to give them some personal space. This isn't possible in every home, but even a little corner with a box, or a bed, can help. Somewhere they can chill in peace, without people stomping around and patting them all the time. In our cat Monkey's case, my wife and I basically gave him our entire bathroom for three weeks. In the beginning, he didn't venture far beyond his box, but we left the door open and gradually he began making more adventurous sorties, exploring the house on his terms. Within two weeks he'd attacked my socks and eaten our favourite monstera.

BRIBE THEM SHAMELESSLY If cats could open salmon cans, they wouldn't need us at all. Fortunately they can't, so we have what veterinarians call 'emotional leverage'. It's pretty easy to win your cat's affection over time with delicious treats, tidbits and even catnip (just be aware, if your cat eats too much catnip, it can cause an upset tummy). This isn't cheating. It's the basis for all healthy relationships. You wined and dined your partner in the beginning too, didn't you?

NO TUMMY RUBS A rookie error first-time cat owners often make is rubbing a cat's tummy, like a dog. Cats really hate this sort of thing. A cat's stomach is their most vulnerable area. The hair follicles there are hyper-sensitive to touch. If you give them a vigorous tummy rub, they'll probably 'bunny kick' you, which isn't as cute as it sounds. Instead, scratch your cat under the chin, on the cheeks and behind the ears. If you do it right, their eyes will half-close with pleasure and they'll tell all their friends how talented you are.

SLOW BLINK FOR THE WIN If your cat looks you in the eye and blinks very slowly, that's cat language for "I love you". It's their version of a smile. You can slow blink right back at them, to let them know, "I acknowledge your love, and the feeling is mutual." Small caveat: some cats see eye contact as a challenge, or a threat, at least in strangers, so save your first slow blink for when your cat does it to you. Don't be the one to make the first move.

Remember, most cats are aloof, tuna-obsessed narcissists. If you can accept that, you're well on the way. Play it cool, give them space, and let them come to you. They will when they're hungry. Trust me. ✽

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Photo Lukasz Wierzbowski

the road less travelled

GISELLE AU-NHIEN NGUYEN IS SHAKING OFF THE UNNECESSARY SHAME OF SINGLEDOM.

I recently turned 34, which means I've been mostly single for almost a decade.

If I had read that sentence 10 years ago and known it was my future, I would have been horrified. At the time I was in the thick of a long-term relationship with someone I thought I'd be with forever. We had it all figured out: we'd eventually get engaged, then married. We'd have kids that looked half like him and half like me. We'd take them to Disneyland every year. We loved each other's families, and we loved one another the most. I was totally set.

But then things changed, as they do. We changed. Nothing happened; no one was cruel. But the relationship that I entered when I was 20 was no longer the relationship that suited me when I was 25. It was with nothing but love that we parted, and I began a new path of my own.

I haven't had a relationship that's lasted more than six months since that big one ended. That's not to say I haven't lived, laughed and loved, and learnt a hell of a lot about myself along the way. I've kissed boys, girls and theys, making memories and connections that have often turned into beautiful friendships. Nothing has stood the test of time romantically, but it doesn't mean things haven't been meaningful all the same.

There have been ups and downs. In my early 20s, all my friends were living it up as singles, partying every weekend and smooching strangers on the dancefloor while my partner and I did old-people stuff like playing Scrabble. Now, it's the exact opposite: many of my mates are married with babies and mortgages, and their weekends look very different than they once did. By my age, my mum had three children; I've got a grumpy old cat. I won't lie – sometimes it does suck. Going to weddings as a single person is especially cursed.

But I've felt my perspective change recently. What if I am already all I need? What if I *am* enough, and it's not about me not being good enough for someone, but actually about not having yet found someone who is good enough for me? What if I can be happy on my own?

When I came out as queer six years ago, part of what that signified to me was a reassessment of what I had been taught to want: the nuclear family, the white picket fence. I ask myself now: do I actually want those things, or do I just think that I have to want them? What does happiness look like to me on my own terms, and is it possible as a single person, when everything I've ever seen has always told me that life is only half as good when you don't have a romantic partner to share it with?

It took me a long time to unlearn the strange and unnecessary shame of singledom. The blessing is that at this age, I know exactly what I want, and what I won't tolerate; I won't settle for anything less than what I know I deserve.

In the meantime, I have so many things to enjoy for myself: slow mornings in bed with coffee, walks to anywhere, blurry nights with the people I love. It sounds cheesy, but it's a joy to be able to do anything I'd like, and to make the person I've known for longest feel loved and nurtured: myself. ✽

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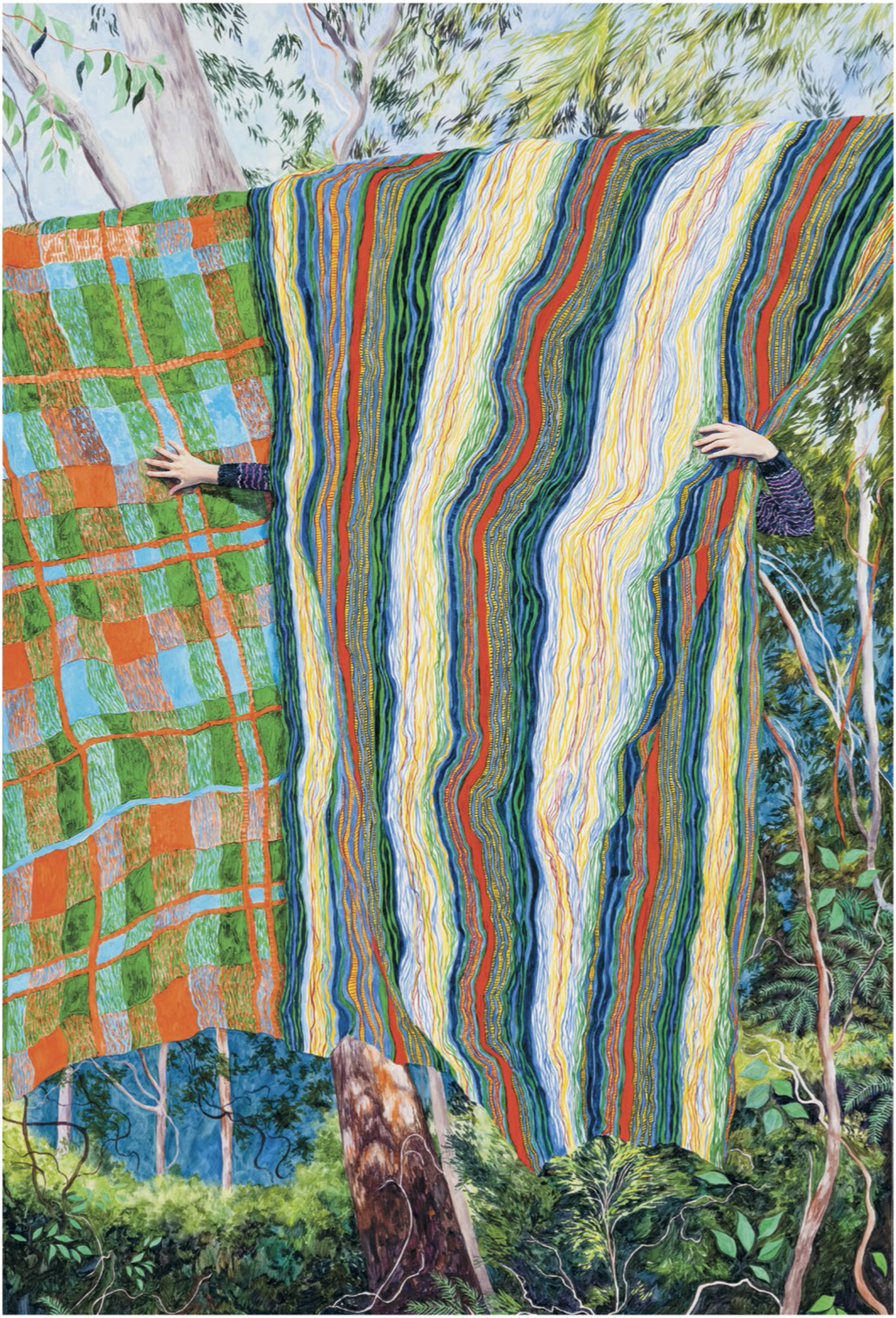


Everything changes, 2021. Oil on board, 90 x 60 cm

inside outside

ARTIST MONICA ROHAN LOVES LANDSCAPES, PATTERNS AND TABLECLOTHS.

All images courtesy of the artist and Jan Murphy Gallery

Hi Monica, we last had you on the cover of frankie in 2016. What have you been up to since then? Heaps of painting! I've had six solo exhibitions and participated in numerous other shows. The biggest change over that time has been a shift in my focus towards painting the landscape. I've also recently started making much larger works on canvas.

Would you still describe your paintings as self-portraits? Not so much anymore. I've been gradually disappearing from my paintings, or maybe detaching or disentangling myself. There are still figures in the work, but they're more of the 'figure in the landscape' genre rather than self-portraiture.

How has your depiction of landscapes changed? In earlier works, I exaggerated the patterns in foliage to create surreal spaces, like removing tree trunks or horizon lines so the detail took over. Gradually, I've shifted to more traditional landscape scenes disrupted by figures and textiles. I'm always on the lookout for more images of landscapes, even when I'm on holidays or just out for an afternoon walk; it's like a gentle obsession. I'm scheming some trips further afield specifically to gather more imagery.

Where does your love of pattern come from? I was brought up to appreciate the transformative capabilities of a tablecloth. I learnt magpie-like op-shopping skills from my mum. And I still find the best things when we go op shopping together; she brings good luck. Also, the cupboard housing Mum's fabric stash was always imbued with magical possibilities. When it comes to my practice, painting details can be a useful tool for exaggerating and distorting space, as well as being meditative and absorbing to look at.

In the past, you've talked about how your paintings touch on feelings of anxiety. What emotions are you exploring through your work now? I think exploring big feelings will always be a part of my work. However, I have a growing interest in addressing issues surrounding the climate crisis and the anxiety of an uncertain future. I'm approaching these themes in a more theatrical way, staging a scene that both conceals and reveals the landscape as a backdrop.

Is there a reason why you shy away from painting faces? I've always preferred to direct the focus towards a situation – what the figures are doing, rather than who they are. Even more so in recent works; the figures are actively intervening in the viewers' perspective of the landscape. I still paint portraits sometimes, but I'm quite selective. I recently painted a portrait of the wonderful musician Asha Jefferies.

How does a painting start for you? Mostly the ideas flow on gradually as I work, but I do allow time to experiment and play, so sometimes something completely new will crop up. Recently I've returned to textiles in a big way, using a clothesline to hang layers of fabrics to act as screens or curtains. It feels like I've discovered a new and exciting way to explore this thread in my practice.

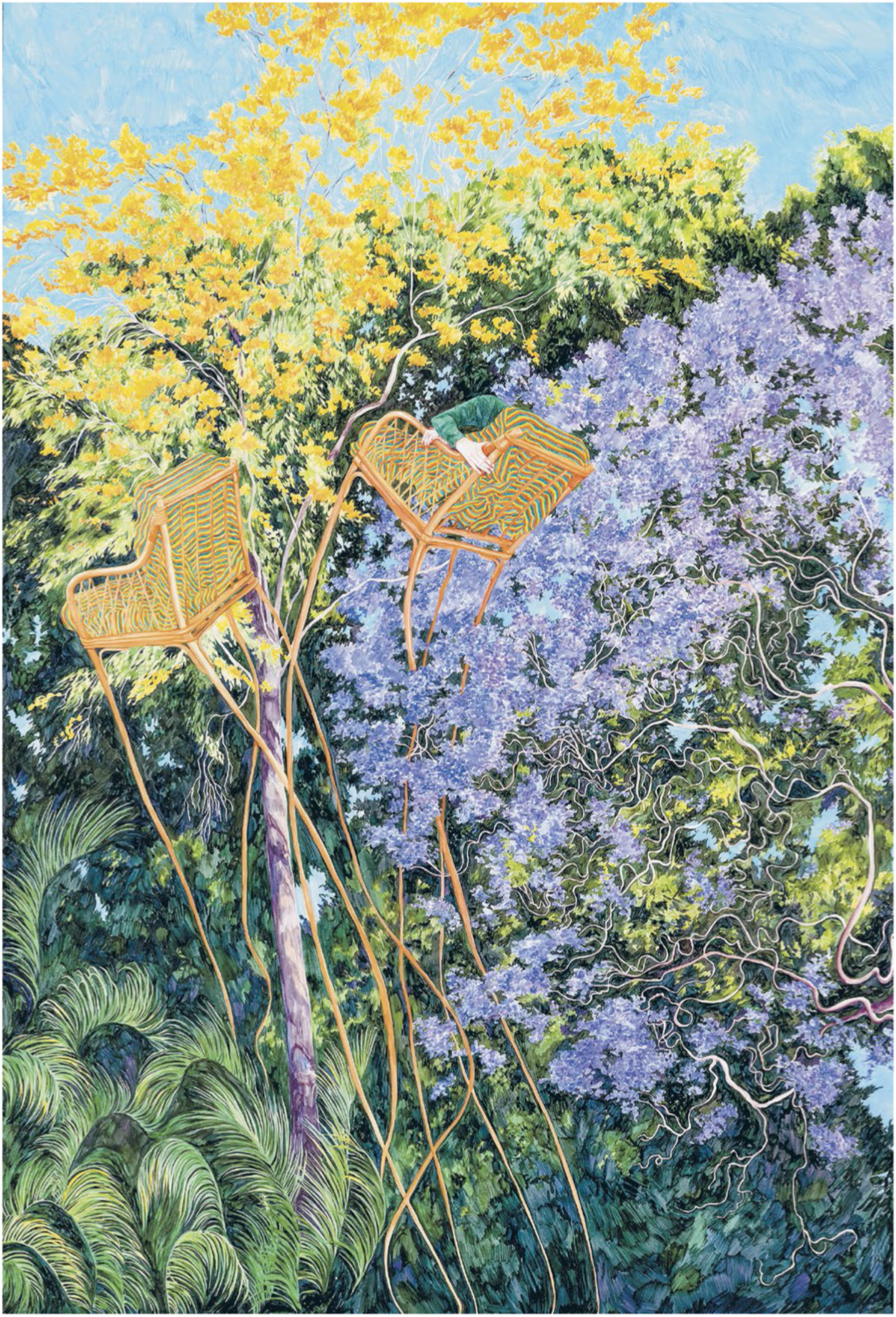
You go to great lengths to take a reference photo of yourself for your paintings. What's the weirdest one you've got in the archive? There was a period of time when I would take stacks of photos throwing myself into the air, so I could paint myself untethered to the ground, floating through trees. As a result, I have lots and lots of launching and landing shots which look quite strange out of context. There's one from uni where I'm dramatically swinging back on a chair – my friend managed to catch the moment I lose control and start falling for real.

Which tools could you not live without? A suite of tiny brushes, Art Spectrum lean medium, Michael Harding 'cobalt green deep' paint, Chroma Incredible brush cleaner, sketchbooks.

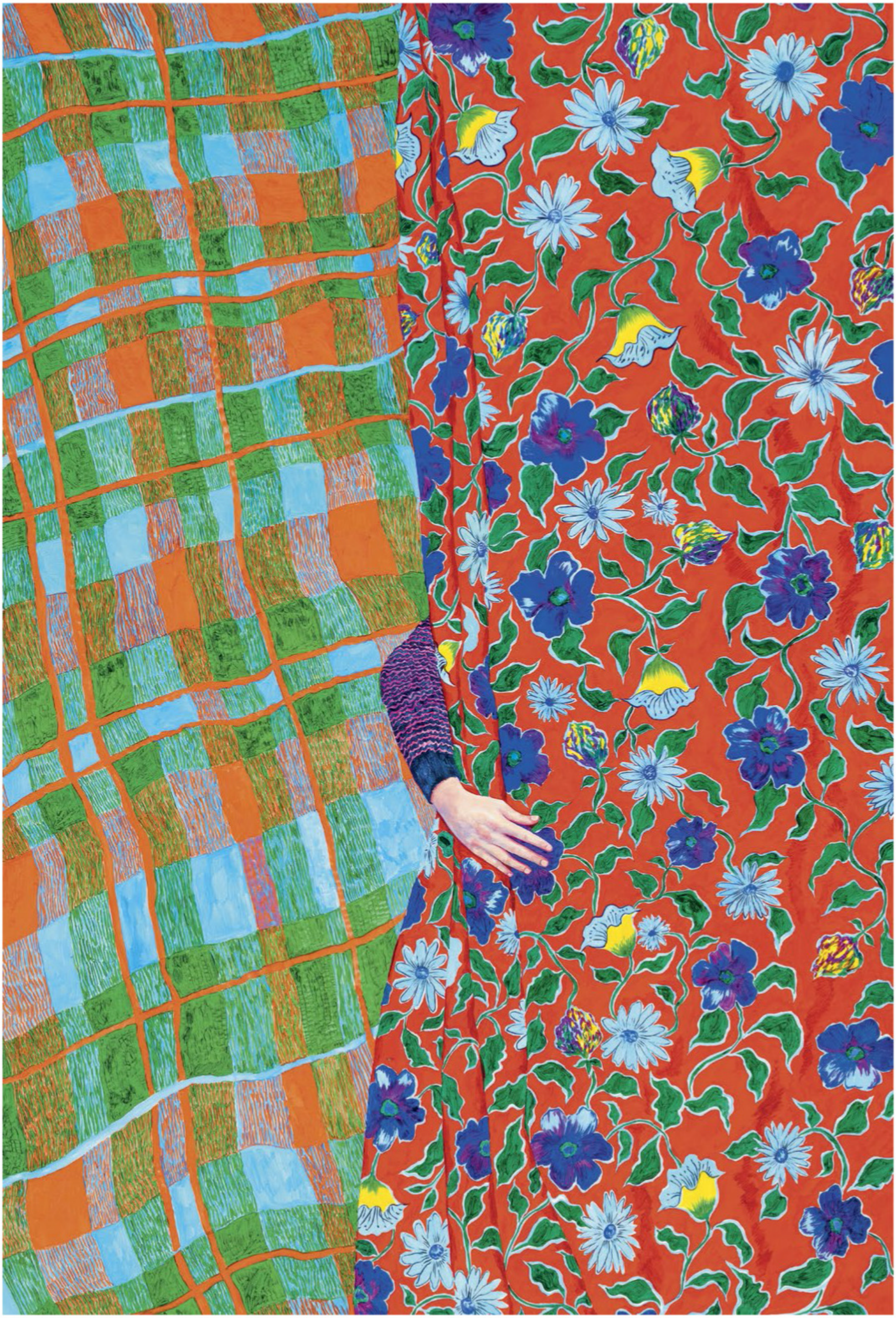
What's been inspiring you lately? Julia Jacklin's album *Pre Pleasure.* I'm also planning a trip to Canberra to see the Cressida Campbell exhibition, which I'm very excited about because she is a genius. And I've enjoyed reading *The Mirror and the Palette* by Jennifer Higgie.

How do you know when a work is done? When it stops nagging me.

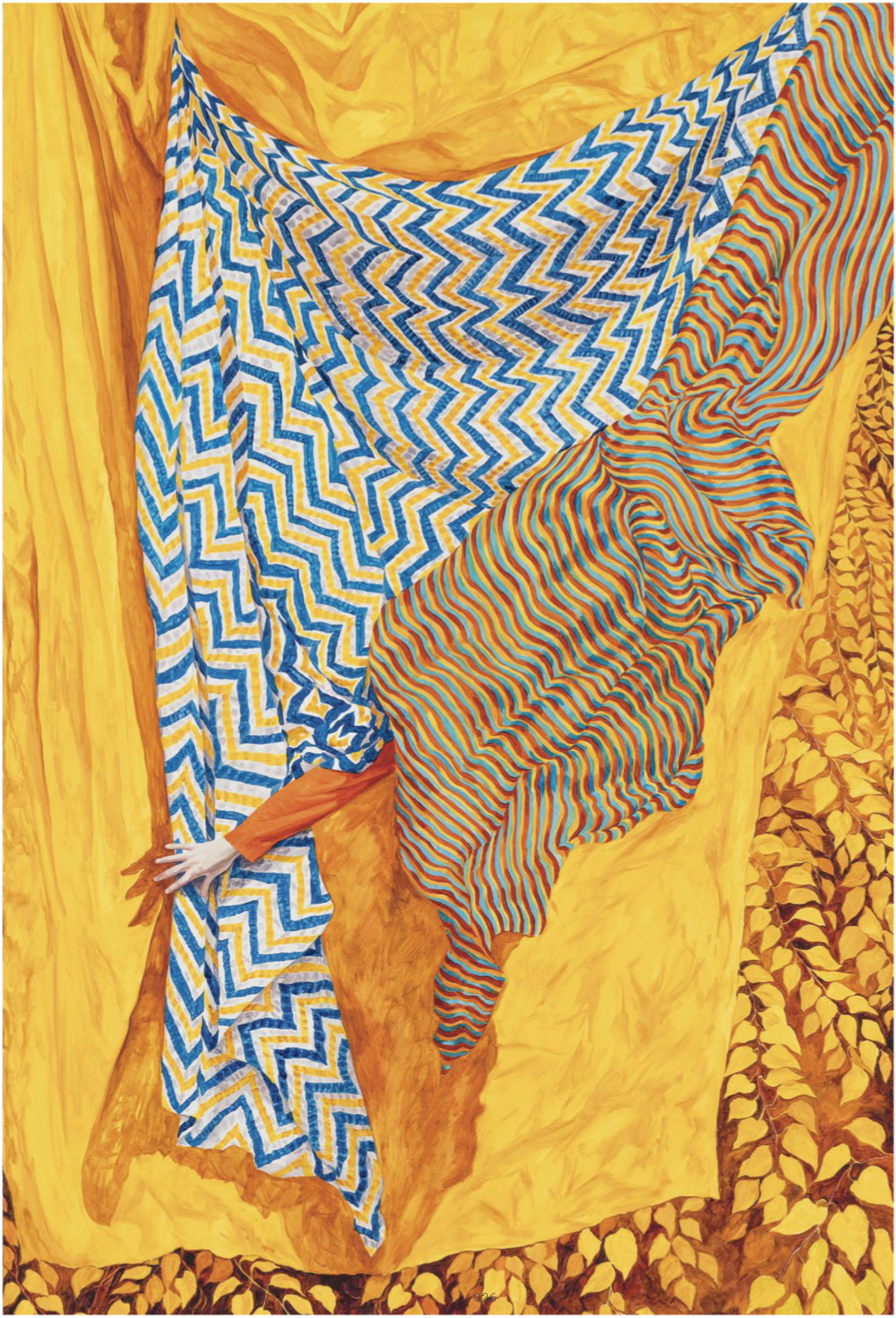
See more from Monica on Instagram at @monrohan. Monica is represented by Jan Murphy Gallery, Brisbane, and Sophie Gannon Gallery, Melbourne. ✽



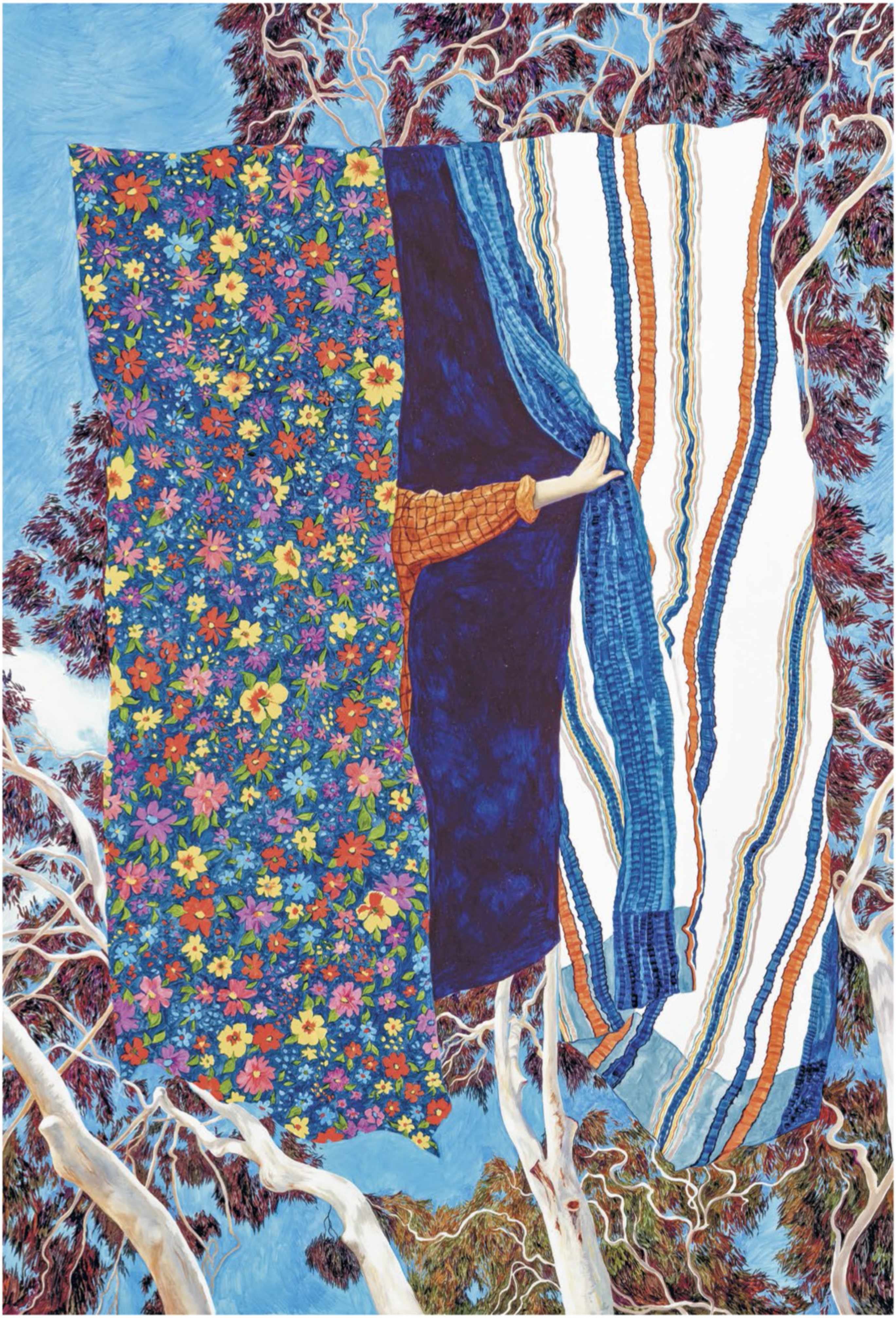
Mind how you go, 2020. Oil on board, 122.5 x 91.5 cm



Divider, 2021. Oil on board, 90 x 60 cm



Drag It Out, 2021. Oil on board, 90 x 60 cm



If I can help it, 2022. Oil on board, 122 x 92 cm

in defence of gossip

DEIRDRE FIDGE HAS FIGURED OUT HOW TO ENJOY A BIT OF HARMLESS HEARSAY.

Last week a friend told me a story. A long, juicy story about two media folk I do not know of who had a huge fight. It was a wild ride: twists and turns, secret nepotism, betrayal and importantly… DRAMA. I loved every minute of it, soaking up the details like a lizard in the sun. In doing so, I noticed how far I've come in my relationship with gossip.

For most of my life I've been strictly anti-gossip. I once went to a dinner party and a friend sarcastically moaned, "Ugh, I can't say much, Dee's too *nice*." Everyone had a chuckle. The origins of this stance are twofold: primarily, it comes from attending an all-girls school where bitching was rife and rarely were these conversations harmless. There was judgment, unverified rumours and real-life negative consequences for those being talked about. That's typical adolescence, but it left a mark on me that evoked guilt and paranoia if I mentioned someone in passing (did I mention it was a Catholic school, aka Guilt Palace?). I lumped everything into a 'Being A Big Meanie' basket and avoided those conversations as much as I avoided using the chapel toilets at school, where rebellious girls applied liquid eyeliner and smoked weed.

The other reason for my anti-gossip stance was hypersensitivity, because I'd hate for anyone to talk about *me* behind *my* back. A deep-seated fear of being talked about in a judgmental way, or worse – being talked about in a judgmental way about things that weren't even *true* – brought a lump to my throat. Existing social anxiety skyrocketed when I'd hear friends mention group chats that existed solely for the purpose of bitching about a certain group, or even individuals. I'd sweatily imagine one clumsy thing I'd said being blown out of proportion and shared among friendship groups. But here I am, now in my 30s, enjoying a bit of goss.

The key turning point was realising the difference between gossip and bitching. It's all on a spectrum, but harmless gossip does exist. Sharing news about two people you know are dating and speculating fruitlessly about what will happen is relatively benign. Posting photos of an acquaintance's new haircut in a group chat with harsh commentary and vomiting emojis – that's pretty mean, my friend, and have you considered taking up a hobby?

Some argue both gossip and bitching play a role in social cohesion. It's been found that strangers are more likely to bond over negative opinions than positive ones. For instance, at a workplace, people are more likely to connect by complaining about their boss than excitedly discussing the new desk chairs. Venting is important – I get that now – and it doesn't hold as much weight as I thought it did. People often share a semi-bitchy opinion and then never think about it again. And truthfully, my life is so boring I doubt anyone is talking about me anyway.

I'd be even more pro-gossip if there were a guarantee it would never get back to the person or create actual reputational damage. While I'm grateful for modern advancements like smartphones and penicillin, I sometimes wish I could go back in time for a nice gossip in a Ye Olde Pub. The news would take weeks to spread (if at all), and there's no instant damage done if the facts aren't all there – it's more about drinking ale in a tavern with your friends before one of you dies of tuberculosis at 28.

But while time travel is out of reach, the best form of gossip is when you know nobody involved, like the two people my friend told me about (I do hope they make up though, because friendship is so important). One of my favourite podcasts involves the hosts reading anonymous gossip submissions and having an extremely fun time analysing them. It satisfies that curious urge without causing any real harm.

This, I think, is the key to gossiping ethically. The next time you want to bitch, and know it's coming from an unkind place, why not instead pass on a tidbit about your friend's colleague's husband whose name you can't remember? The story itself is a banger. ✽

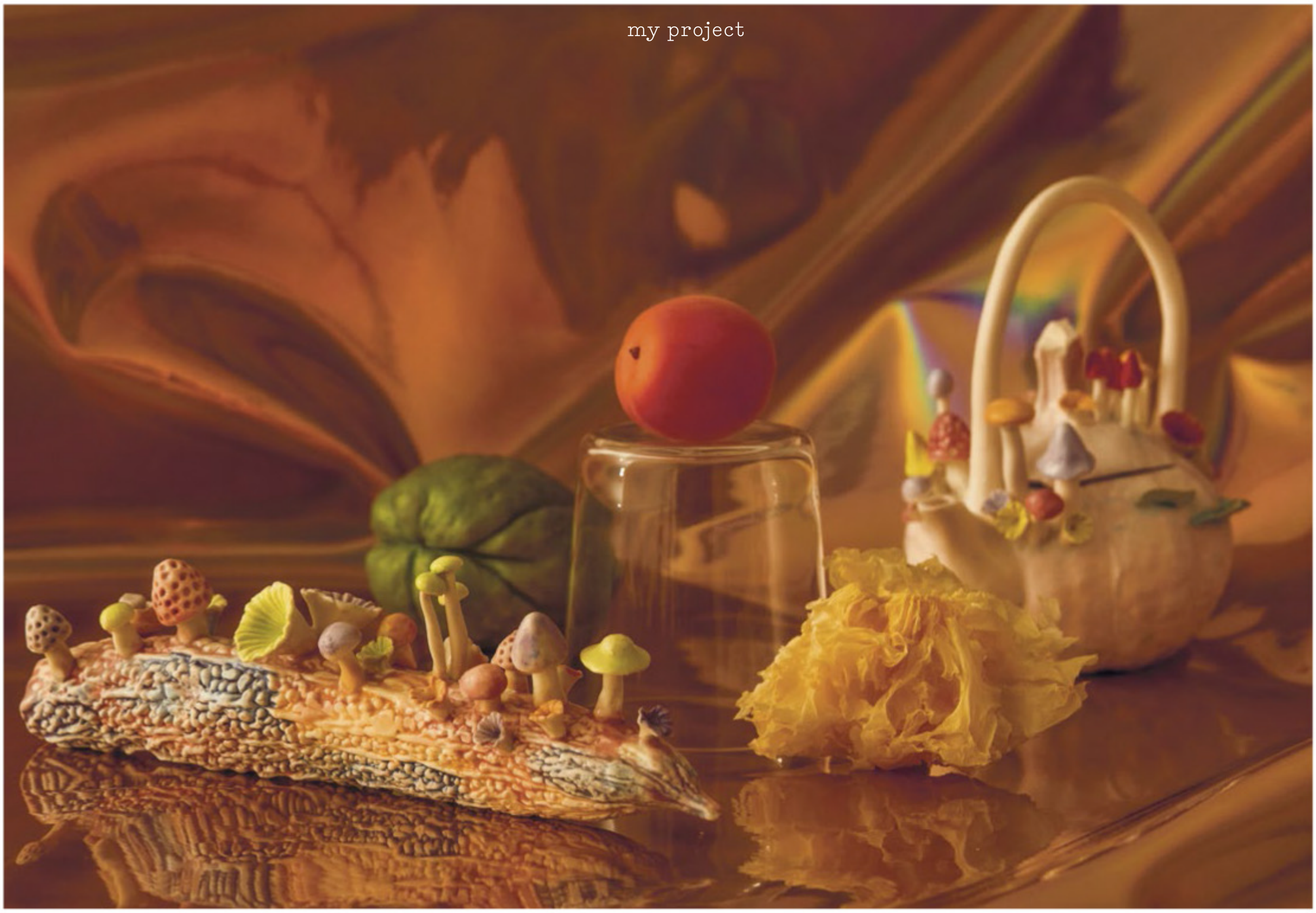


Photo Sian Fay Kerr

a place to bloom

ARTIST YANG QIU MAKES WEIRD AND WONDERFUL OBJECTS FOR HER BRAND ALBATROSS CERAMIC.

Why the name Albatross? Albatross is a character in one of the stories from my favourite Chinese philosopher, Zhuangzi. It means taking time to do things you like and being yourself. When the right moment comes, you can fly up.

What led you to ceramics? I started to make ceramics about four years ago. I was a pastry chef for many years, but I always wanted to study something related to art, so I decided to study fine art in 2017 at UNSW. My majors were painting and ceramics. After I graduated, I worked part-time as a pastry chef until September 2022, when I decided to do ceramics full-time.

Where does your magical style come from? I'm an only child in my family, so when I was a kid, I sometimes felt lonely. I liked to talk to objects around me and give them characters. I think that's why I love to put legs and faces on my work. When I'm making something, I imagine that I'm making a new friend for myself, and that they are dancing in my bedroom, having a party with me. I'd say that mushrooms are like my self-portrait: they love the dark and living in hidden places, but they grow beautifully.

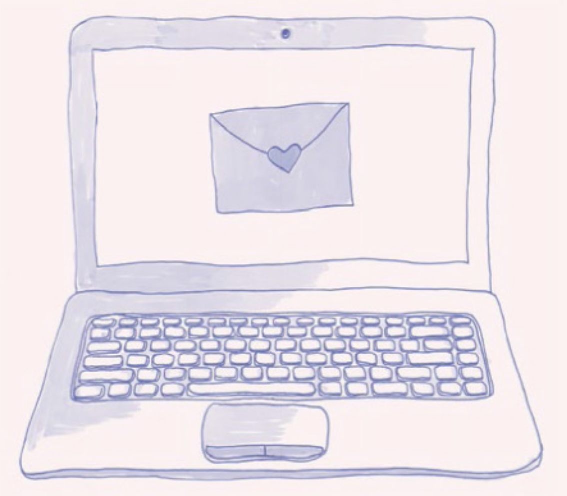
Tell us about your process. I use local vegetables and fruits to make plaster moulds and slip cast them – this is for the main body on my works – then I hand-build all the mushrooms, legs and faces. After the bisque firing, I paint them with underglaze and dip them in clear glaze for firing. Finally, I brush mother-of-pearl lustre on the glazed pieces and fire them at low temperatures.

How important is functionality to your pieces? I don't think functionality is important for my works. I would rather focus on the playfulness.

Where do you find inspiration? Asian groceries and local farmers' markets are my favourite places. I can always find beautiful and weirdly shaped vegetables and fruits to use for my mould making. I also really like Japanese artist Yuko Higuchi – her drawings have so much detail and are so creepy.

What are you working on at the moment? I recently made a huge pumpkin mould. It's the biggest mould I have made so far, but I had some trouble with firing, as some pieces cracked badly. I'm doing experiments to find a way to avoid all the cracking, which is fun. I'm really enjoying the process.

Where can we see more? Online at albatrossceramic.com or on Instagram at @albatrossceramic. ✽



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everybody has a story

SAMANTHA PAYNE LEADS A SUPPORT NETWORK FOR WOMEN WHO'VE EXPERIENCED EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS.

As told to **Shannon Jenkins**

Seven years ago, I had my first miscarriage. I already had a daughter, so I was met with comments like, "At least you have a child," "At least it happened early," or, "At least you know you can get pregnant." None of that helped. And the silence from those who chose not to mention it told me that the death of my baby meant nothing to them. I felt like I had to keep it private, which isolated me.

My husband and I then had another pregnancy and lost that baby as well. I got really angry after that, because I could see that if one in four pregnancies ends in loss, then I couldn't be the only person who wanted support. So, I organised little groups with women in Sydney and asked them about their experiences. That's where the idea for The Pink Elephants Support Network came from.

Pink Elephants is a circle of support for anyone who's impacted by early pregnancy loss. We want to make sure that no one has to walk that journey alone and that they're met with empathy and understanding. In 2018, we surveyed 1700 women online and 75 per cent told us they felt unsupported through miscarriage. That was our first survey and I shut it down after 24 hours because we couldn't analyse the data – it was way too many people. We asked the University of Melbourne and Monash University to re-do the survey with us and got similar results.

We've since extended our research to workplaces and found that women want workplaces to better understand the experience of pregnancy loss. The reason for that is really beautiful: they want to ensure there are better support pathways for the next people who have a miscarriage. That just shows that when women are given the opportunity to make a difference, they do it.

One of the biggest things Pink Elephants is doing is increasing pathways to support and working with allied health professionals so they know we exist and can refer their patients to us. Miscarriage is medically managed fairly well in Australia, but the emotional toll is often forgotten. If people aren't sent specifically to counselling or support services, they go online to find it themselves, which is not OK. On top of that, there are huge barriers in Australia to being more inclusive to diverse communities. Pink Elephants' representation is quite 'New South Wales white woman' and that's awful. We haven't got the funds or resources to connect with women from different backgrounds. We know that needs to happen, but we can't do it without support, as we rely heavily on donations and fundraisers. I'm really excited about diversifying our content to be more inclusive of all the different types of early pregnancy loss and all the different types of women in Australia.

There's a lot of internalised shame with early pregnancy loss. If you 'fail' to have a baby, you feel like a failure. Women are told to be good mothers and that being one looks a certain way, so when anger and jealousy come up, it's really confronting. People don't like to associate women with those emotions. Another misperception is that the grief isn't real, and the baby somehow isn't real because we can't see it and there's no funeral service. People are just expected to fall pregnant again a month later and be OK. But there's actually a huge period of emotional trauma, and if that's left unsupported, it can lead to poor mental health – anxiety, depression and even suicidal thoughts.

My advice for supporting someone through a miscarriage is to be present and acknowledge the loss. Say, "I'm sorry your baby died." Use the right language and don't ever use statements like "at least". Don't try to shut them down or fix them, because we don't need fixing. True empathy is sitting with us in our darkness, holding our hands and acknowledging how shitty and awful it is, and doing practical things that help us get by.

A big thing that's been beautiful for me is when people remember to check in on special dates. If your friend experienced a miscarriage and it's coming up to Mother's Day, acknowledge that by saying, "Hey, you're a mother too. How are you feeling with all of this?" If the due date would have been in September, send them a message in September saying, "If you need to go for a drink or a coffee or a walk, I'm here for you." If you're grieving, stop for a little bit, acknowledge your feelings and offer yourself compassion. It's OK to react in any way to the loss of your baby. You don't always have to wear a brave face. And it's OK to ask for help.

I had my third pregnancy loss in July 2020. It felt really cruel and unfair, and it was hard to carry on working because it was triggering. I had to take bereavement leave for a month. I've got a six-month old baby now, but pregnancy after loss is a marathon and I endured crippling anxiety every day. Every time I went to the toilet, I would check to see if there was blood. Every time something felt slightly off (and a lot of things do in pregnancy) I would suspect that my baby had died. My first words when I saw her were, "She's really real." Even though I'd seen a scan of the baby with a heartbeat and her wriggling in my belly, I had disconnected to protect my heart because I genuinely thought I would lose her.

My losses have given me a lot more empathy and understanding, but there's no silver lining. I hate it when people try to find the silver lining because that's not what this is. But I have managed to create some meaning from the death of my babies, which is something I'm incredibly privileged to do.

Pink Elephants is completely different to how I envisioned it seven years ago, but that shows how much we're listening to our community. I thought I was setting up a support network so that we could get together, have a wine and feel seen in each other's company. But I noticed that the lack of support for these women was massive, and that no one was doing anything about it because it was too big a problem.

It was easier for people to look away, and one thing I don't like to do in life is look away. That's part of our success: we were willing to go where no one else has gone. We now support tens of thousands of women each year and have put miscarriage on the agenda in Australia. We've changed federal law to introduce paid leave after miscarriage – which I never thought I would have anything to do with – but it took an organisation dedicated to focusing on early pregnancy loss to notice the gaps.

Find out more about Pink Elephants at pinkelephants.org.au. ✽

Photo Sophie Joyce

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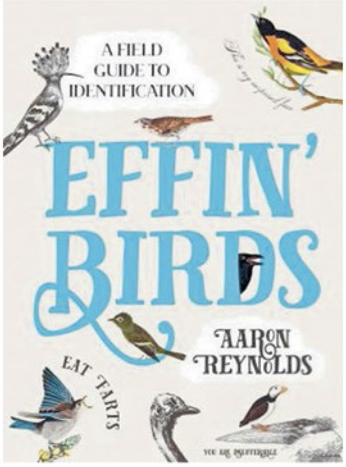
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AARON REYNOLDS
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YOU ARE INSUFFERABLE

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Beautiful Birds
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24 Bookmarks

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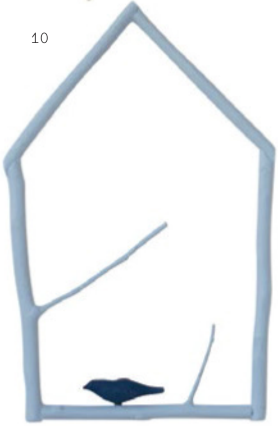

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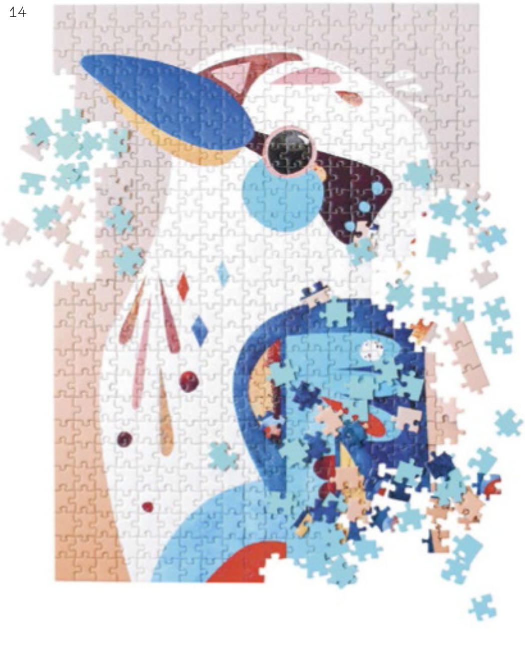

bird's the word

A BIT OF APPRECIATION FOR OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS, PLEASE.

1. Effin' Birds (hardcover), rrp $31.25, booktopia.com.au **2.** Studio M' Early Bird oval plate, rrp $42, hands.com.au **3.** Nagula Jarndu Gunbaliny Oyster Catcher bucket hat, rrp $45, nagulajarndu.com.au **4.** Embroidery Crane Scissors, rrp $8.95, stheory.etsy.com **5.** Erstwilder Bird Ripple resin stud earrings, rrp $10, erstwilder.com **6.** Bordallo Pinheiro 'Jarros' duck pitcher, rrp $210, farfetch.com **7.** Gibbs Smith Gift Beautiful Birds bookmark box, rrp $24.75, booktopia.com.au **8.** Togetherness ceramic wallhanging in Flock, rrp $65, togethernessdesign.com **9.** Cider Duck Pattern contrasting sweater vest, rrp $36, shopcider.com **10.** Twiggargerie wall house, rrp $65, sageandclare.com **11.** Molly Coombs Marr Snazzy Cockatiel earrings, rrp $85, mollycoombsmarr.com **12.** Masterskaya 17:17 Bird handmade bottle cork, rrp $171, masterskaya1717.etsy.com **13.** Vitra Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec L'Oiseau cork, rrp $275, endclothing.com **14.** Pete Cromer Kookaburra puzzle, rrp $24.95, petecromer.com

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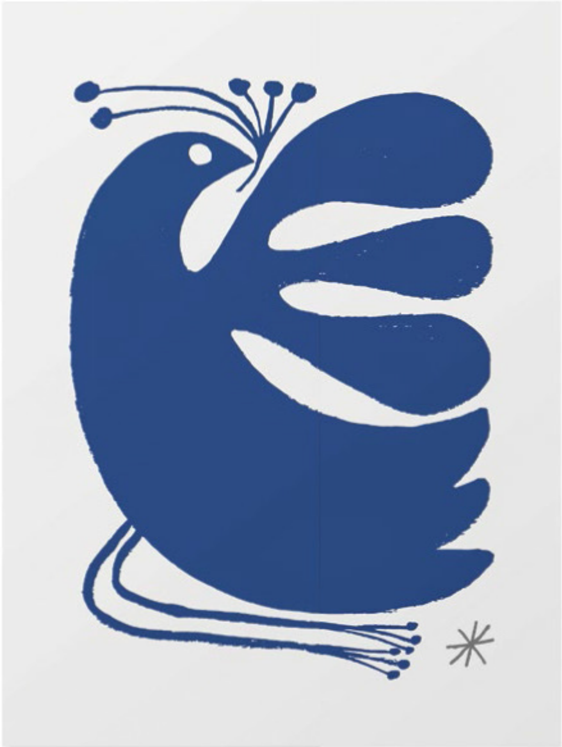

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CERTIFIED
BIRD NERD

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THE COMMON
AUSTRALIAN
PINK AND GREY GALAH

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26

LOVE BIRD
MATCHES
MADE IN HEAVEN

27

15. Christopher David Ryan Blue Bird Print, around $83, christopherdavidryan.com **16.** Bridget Farmer embroidered patch, rrp $11.95, bridgetfarmerprintmaker.com **17.** Present and Correct Icon letter set, around $14, presentandcorrect.com **18.** Uneede Benson The Duck mug, around $30, uneede.cc **19.** Braw Paper Co. Splendid Fairy-Wren enamel pin rrp $14.95, brawpaperco.com.au **20.** RYDER The Galah Tee, rrp $89, ryderlabel.com **21.** Town Camp Designs Thepa bird enamel pin, rrp $20, towncampdesigns.org.au **22.** Present and Correct Bulgarian Bird Stamps (1964), around $26, presentandcorrect.com **23.** The Printed Peanut Swallow Bird letterpress die cut decoration, rrp $14.90, hands.com.au **24.** Goose tote bag, rrp $39, timelessxcreations.etsy.com **25.** Lily Adelaide Upton Rainbow Lorikeets PDF embroidery pattern, rrp $13.20 **26.** The Printed Peanut Love Bird Matches A6 card, around $11, theprintedpeanut.co.uk **27.** Maya Jade Studios handmade goose cup, rrp $79, mayajadestudios.etsy.com

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room to grow

THESE YOUNG FARMERS ARE LEARNING ON THE GO – AND DOING THINGS A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY IN THE PROCESS.

Interviews **Emma Do**

L-R: Kirsty Edwards, Charlotte Bartlett-Wynne, Patrick Turnbull, Eve Fraser, Caitlin Mighall

farm raiser

PHOTOS **HILARY WALKER**

The Farm Raiser crew first met while studying at the University of Melbourne's Burnley Horticultural College, and bonded over a desire to grow food in the city. After uni, they each went their separate ways to gain experience before regrouping and starting their not-for-profit farm in 2018, in the Melbourne suburb of Bellfield.

Tell us about this piece of land. **Patrick Turnbull:** The farm itself is on Department of Education land, at Waratah Special Developmental School. I was living around the corner and for a uni assignment, approached them about how they irrigated the school. I noticed this 1.5-acre patch out the back and thought of growing there – they were really happy to back any plan that increases the community of the school. Now a group of senior students come and pack veggie boxes with us as work experience. In future we want to provide more experiences to help students gain employment post-school.

What do you grow here? **PT:** Mostly salad greens and brassicas like broccoli and cauliflower. Most of our produce goes through a box program. **Charlotte Bartlett-Wynne:** We make our boxes from a combination of our own produce and other Victorian farms that are either organic, biodynamic or spray free – that way we can get a good variety and it's not repetitive.

What's your farming ethos? **CBW:** We essentially try to operate within capitalism without subscribing to its standard structures and practices. So we have cooperative management, a sliding scale for our boxes, and we don't ask anyone to prove their status in order to access concession prices. Then we have sovereign boxes, which are for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and community boxes, which are for people who are struggling to afford good vegetables (the costs are covered by generous sponsors or we try to absorb the cost). We have a farm gate as well, where local people can buy veggies once a week, and that's a self-serve, pay-as-you-feel system. Then we also do a market, and wholesale in an affluent area, which is where we're more business-minded.

Are there downsides to farming in the city? **Eve Fraser:** It's mostly benefits because you get a pretty instant community of people. What's hard is the financial viability of such a small space, and the labour needed to operate on a small scale without large machinery. **CBW:** It required an outrageous amount of work in the first two years, which we all put in.

Are more and more young people interested in farming now? **CBW:** There's a pipeline of hospo people going into farming, which was my journey. Quite a few people like food, like doing something with their body, and not being stuck inside a small room, working horrible hours.

What do you love most about running Farm Raiser? **Caitlin Mighall:** Seeing how much people love what we do. There's always someone who will stop and say, "Whoa, there's a farm here – tell me everything." Also, I don't have to worry about the rising cost of vegetables. **EF:** Engaging with the local community. We've got a volunteer program on Fridays and it seems to just make people happy to come and frolic in the dirt.

Katie Arena in her garden. Opposite: Katie's partner, Robert Ryan

little lyndoch flower farm

PHOTOS **FABLE AND FIG**

Little Lyndoch Flower Farm in the Barossa Valley is the work of couple Katie Arena and Robert Ryan. For the last few years, they've been supplying florists and their local community with beautiful blooms, and are working hard to expand their patch. Katie tells us how a spontaneous idea blossomed into a fully fledged business.

What do you grow here? Our farm is two acres but we're probably growing on only one. Last year we were just growing dahlias and ranunculus; this year, we're growing three times the number of dahlias and we've also got other annual flowers. We have zinnia, delphinium and have a cutting garden, which we've filled with lots of different dainty varieties.

Did you come from a farming background? My family were vegetable farmers for a long time, but I had no involvement in any of that. Rob was a personal trainer, and still is. And I had just started The Queen's Quarters, which is my floral design studio where we do flowers for weddings and events. That's actually the reason why we bought the property in 2018 – we needed the space because we were doing a lot of events.

How did this all begin? It was actually Rob who fell in love with growing dahlias – this personal trainer covered in tattoos! Growing flowers filled our days with passion and purpose – if you start, you don't look back. We learnt mainly through trial and error and internet research, but I also think the flower-farming community and the growing community are so open to sharing knowledge – that's one reason why we have learnt so much.

What are some of the early mistakes that make you cringe now? Being naive and thinking that you just plant a seed or tuber and it grows. But also buying way too many seedlings – more than two people could actually manage. Another mistake was hand watering; we didn't even know what irrigation was. Rob taught himself how to irrigate the entire farm; that was life-changing.

How has the farm changed your perspective? When I used to go to the wholesale flower market as a customer, I'd look at a bunch for $15 and screw my nose up. Now I appreciate what actually goes into creating five or 10 stems. I don't think farmers could ever really get paid enough – people don't understand what goes into growing flowers or food. We say, "It's dahlia season" and people think, "Oh, they've just grown." But we started six months ago, preparing the soil, fertilising. You work for four or five months before the flowers actually bloom, then you harvest them. It's an immense amount of work.

What's an average day like for you? Crazy. We generally wake up at about 4.30am. Rob will tend to the animals, water the farm, and I focus on admin and customer relations and orders from florists. There's never a dull moment; the farm throws us challenges all the time, whether it's pest control or waking up to a burst pipe in the back of the paddock. You have to be an A-grade problem-solver.

What life lessons have you picked up? Patience. You can't rush Mother Nature. And when you've grown something yourself, you just feel grateful – it's very rewarding.

Clarence Bruinsma and Adam Byrne

bush to bowl

PHOTOS **SOPHIE JOYCE**

Bush to Bowl is a First Nations-owned social enterprise in Northern Sydney that grows, sells and educates visitors about native plants. Clarence Bruinsma (Yaegl) tells us about Bush to Bowl's mission, and how he and co-owner Adam Byrne (Garigal/Gadigal) got started.

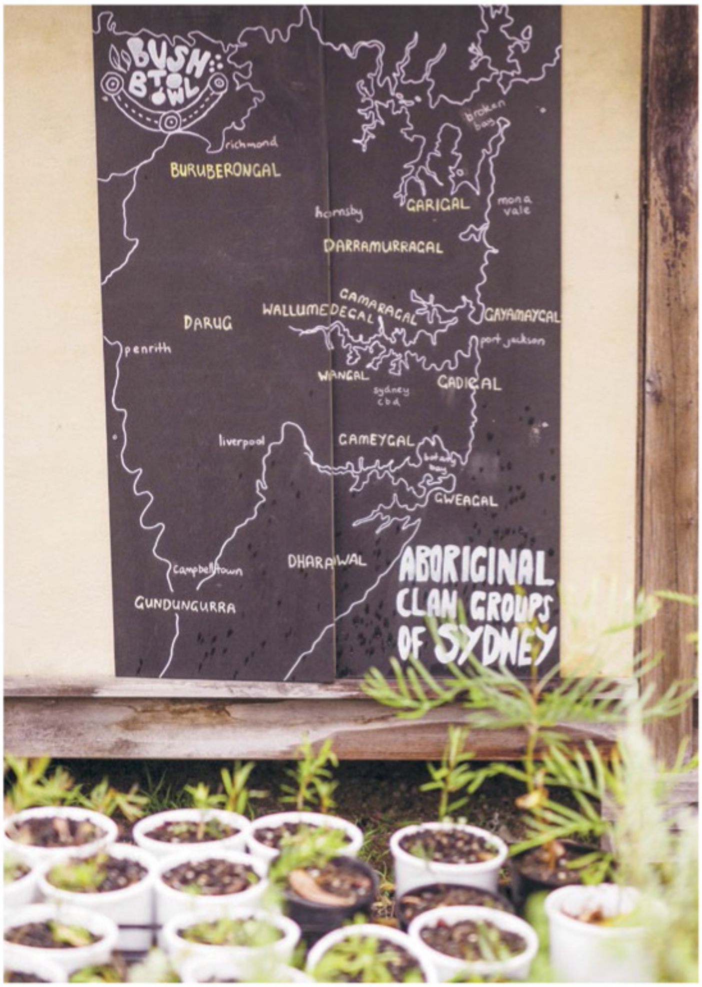
Why did you open Bush to Bowl? I'm a landscaper by trade, but I didn't connect with some of the people in the industry because I don't like exotic gardens – I like to put in local flora. Clarence had heaps of knowledge about bush foods before we met, and was growing stuff in his backyard. I was also growing and propagating bushfoods on my balcony because I loved it. We used to go to mob meet-ups and would just have conversations about how to bring our cultural philosophies into our day-to-day work. We started yarning about bush foods and realised that there's only 2 per cent of First Nations people in the industry. We saw an opportunity to connect people in our area to the local culture, and to help other mob connect back to the foods stolen from them.

What do you grow here? We grow a lot of herbs in our nursery space, then we have a space in Peats Ridge where we're growing things like samphire, which is like a native asparagus; warrigal greens, which is like your native spinach; mint bush; sea parsley; karkalla; and sea purslane, which can be used as a salty addition to salads or stir fries. We do a lot of our own foraging – we see Country as our big farm as well. We forage things like lemon myrtle, cinnamon myrtle, saltbush and ruby saltbush. Currently we supply to restaurants, caterers, local bakeries and kitchens, and sell direct to customers.

How did you learn about growing native plants? I learnt from connecting to my community, and to other family members. When you start connecting with other mob, through organisations or elsewhere, you build that kinship and the bigger your family gets. The next thing you know, you've got aunties, uncles, brothers and sisters everywhere. I recently learnt that one of my great, great-grandfathers used to sell native yams, native berries and things like that around The Hawkesbury, so it's funny that I've come full circle.

What are some of your goals? To educate the young ones coming in and to help them see how important Country and First Nations culture and histories are. To build up the confidence of our staff to go out and teach, and to take pride in their culture. Eventually we'd like to have a bigger piece of land which we can farm, and where people can come stay and experience how our ancestors foraged for thousands of years.

Why should we grow more native foods in our backyards? There are more exotic plants than native plants in Australia, so why not replace all those European herbs with a native equivalent? If you pair saltbush with pepperberry, which is from Tasmania, for example, it's like your salt and pepper. If you grow local things, it's good for native fauna, and you'll also learn more about Country – how people survived off that plant, how it was medicine. We need to get into that mindset of, "How do we give back to Country?" At Bush to Bowl, we always say that the plants are our ancestors. There are thousands of years of stories in a plant.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Nesbert Kagonda and Ruby Clark

tanaka farm project

PHOTOS **MARCUS COBLYN**

Nesbert Kagonda and Ruby Clark run Fenton, a neighbourhood bistro in Carlton, Victoria. Keen to learn more about the food system, the duo set up a small farm just outside Melbourne's city limits, where they now grow veggies and share garden beds with likeminded restaurants.

Why did you decide to start a farm? **Nesbert Kagonda:** My parents own a farm in South Gippsland where they do a bit of cattle farming. Having that opportunity, we decided to use their land and grow a bit of food ourselves. We started with a couple of garden beds three years ago as an experiment. **Ruby Clark:** We were mostly trying to use the produce on our breakfast menu in our past café.

How has the farm evolved since? **NK:** It's always come with challenges. We started in 2019 then were locked down for two years. Then we had bushfires, but persevered through all that. **RC:** Now we're kind of renting – we're doing a land-share farm concept at the Fenton Hill Organic Farm in Clarkefield. **NK:** We've got about three sections of garden beds that span out to about an acre if you put it all together.

How did you learn about farming? **NK:** YouTube, podcasts like *No-Till Market Garden*, documentaries. It was mostly trial and error, though. When we started, we were reading all these articles and watching a lot of videos, and it seemed quite intimidating, but really, you're going to mess it up anyway. So, you may as well start and put things in the ground. Some things will work, some things will fail. You learn and just repeat what works.

What do you grow here? **NK:** When we started, we wanted to grow as many different things as possible but it left us spread thin. Now we want to grow a few nice things and get the most out of them. The autumn–winter was the most productive because we had a lot of cauliflower, broccoli, silverbeet, kohlrabi and beetroots. We also have quite a few different herbs. Right now, we're waiting for the rain to stop – we're pretty much just maintaining grass.

How do you manage running both the farm and the restaurant? **NK:** We had to adjust our expectations. I kind of stopped loving what I was doing because I'd leave work at 1pm then head up to the farm and work until 9pm. Doing that a couple of days in a row or moving 15 cubic litres of compost on my own… I completely exhausted myself. That's when I was like, "We need to reimagine this project in a way that is sustainable." So now the approach is to invite other restaurants and work as a community – it means that you can delegate and share the stressors and also celebrate the successes. We've just put in 150 tomato crops with Heart Attack and Vine, which is a bar and restaurant across the road from us, and are working with them to do a little passata party. We also have our friends at Manzé restaurant in North Melbourne, who grow specific stuff for their menu. They each go up there a couple of times a week.

What's a typical day at the farm like? **NK:** Head out, do a bit of a walkthrough and see how the crops are managing, if any pests are eating them, if they need a bit of a prune or need to be trellised. For the most part, they're good – you just put things in the ground and they grow and look after themselves. Then there's weeding, composting, watering and lastly, harvesting.

How has the farm changed your perspective? **NK:** We understand when prices go up for things because there's bad weather and farmers can't get anything out of their fields. Now we always know when something is running out at the market, when it's not available. We're grateful that it's not our base income, because every plan we have, there's always something unpredictable, whether it's rabbits that come through, or the number of pests skyrocketing. We've become more realistic – the farm is about learning and understanding where our food's coming from, rather than about being 100 per cent productive. At times it is productive, but when the weather isn't conducive, it's more of a hobby project. It may take us five or 10 years to get good at it, so we might as well make it as playful as possible. And that takes the intimidation out of it.

What do you love most about running the farm? **RC:** Coming back to the shop and being able to share it with the customers. Saying, "This is fried cauliflower we've made but we also grew it," or, "This one's really funky – it came out purple." After the lockdowns, we were also able to invite a lot of customers and the community down to the farm. Nes would go down with 10 people, and they'd all get so excited about getting the garden beds ready and planting together. **NK:** When we started, I wanted the most organic, productive farm, but now I just want to have a space where we take locals down, do some gardening, have lunch, hang out and have a laugh. It does wonders, mentally. Not many spaces like that exist, and I think many people want to grow food, but don't know how or don't have access to land.

What life lessons has the farm taught you? **NK:** It's a pretty humbling experience. You might grow all these cauliflowers and then it rains or gets really hot and you lose half of them. You have to pick yourself up and keep going – or quit. But living with that disappointment is important. I went back last week and lost all these chillies, but I wasn't as attached to it as I was in the beginning. I think that is a pretty good life lesson: to let go a bit and have a bit of compassion towards yourself. Because it's also meant to be about having fun. ✽

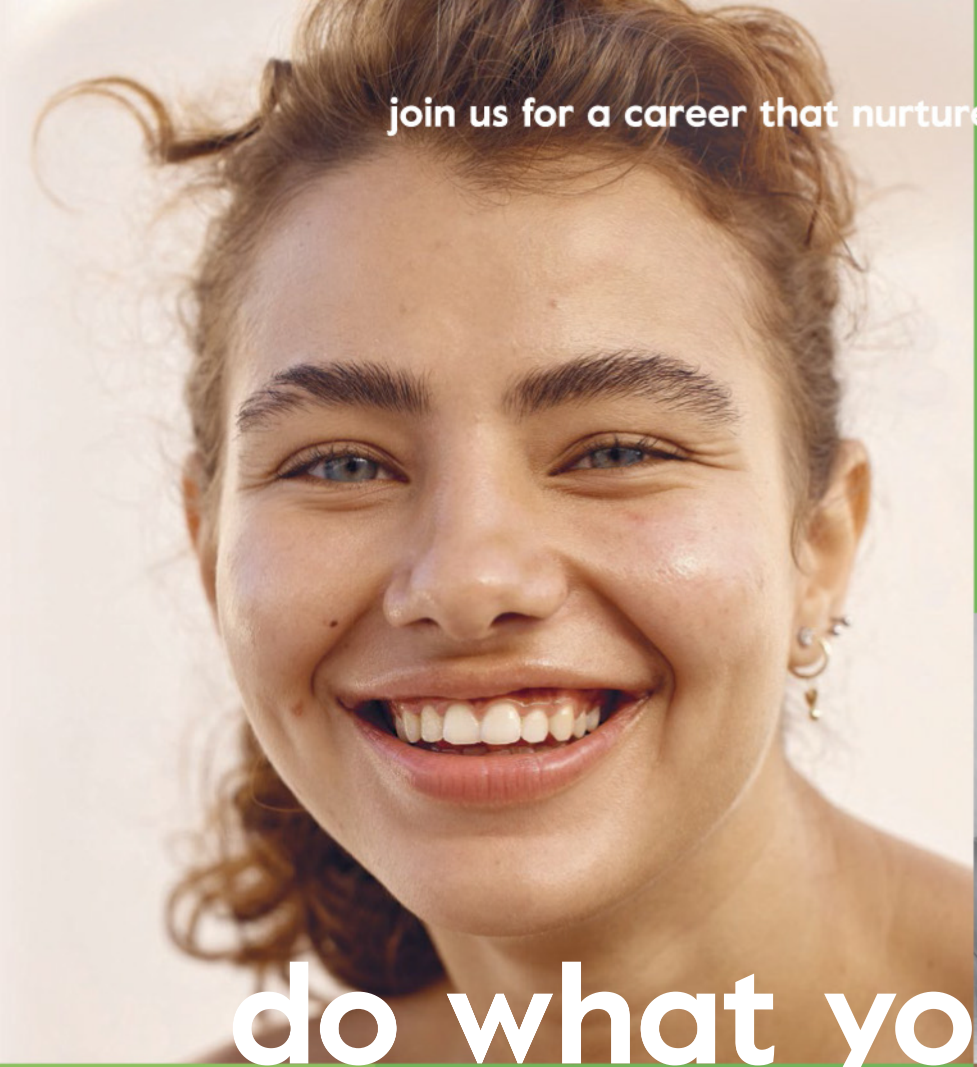
NIFTY TIPS FOR HOME GARDENERS

Farm Raiser says:
- Plant things you'll actually use
- Lettuces, radishes and mizunas are easy to grow quickly
- Connect with older people in your neighbourhood who have great gardens

Little Lyndoch says:
- You can grow flowers in pots and on windowsills
- Zinnias or dahlias are great for beginners
- Every flower requires different care. Invest time into learning about what you're growing

Bush to Bowl says:
- Tasty native plants to grow include: river mint, mint bush (aka native thyme), native oregano, sea parsley, saltbush, native raspberries (best grown in a pot), finger lime

Tanaka Farm Project says:
- All you need is good soil, compost, heaps of sunlight and patience
- Don't get stressed if something dies – just keep experimenting



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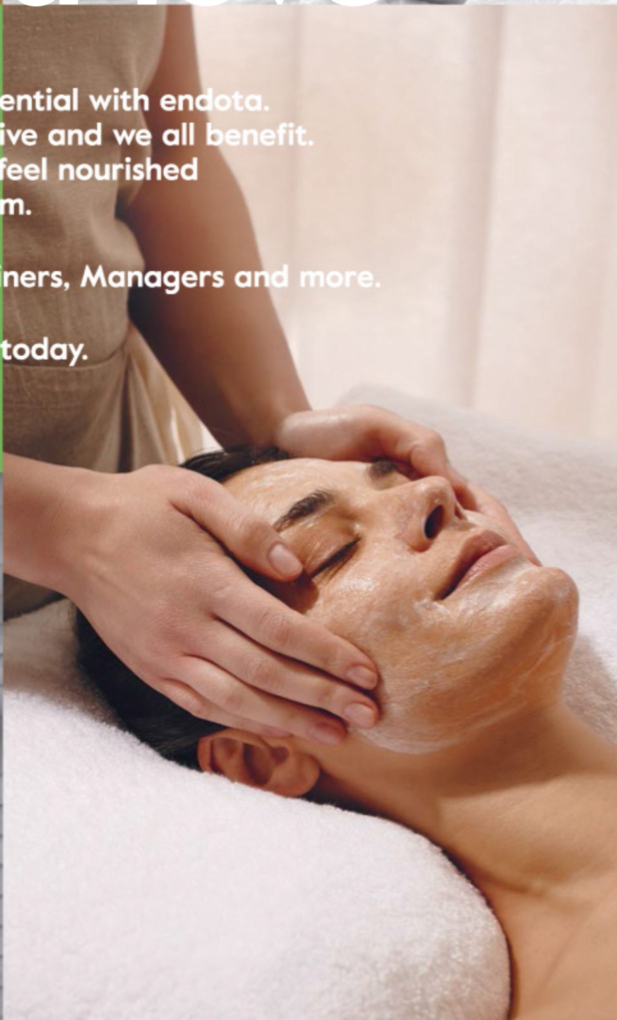

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ARSENIC
DYE
RADIUM

Illustration Molly McCammon

history’s deadliest garb

SUFFERING FOR FASHION WAS THE NORM BACK WHEN CLOTHING POSED A FATAL RISK TO WEARERS AND MAKERS ALIKE.

Words **Shannon Jenkins**

KILLER CRINOLINES You may not know it by name, but you’ve almost certainly seen the crinoline – a cage-like hoop skirt – in your favourite period dramas. Hugely popular among French and British women of every class in the 1850s and 1860s, crinolines were worn underneath a skirt to give the wearer an exaggerated bell-shaped silhouette. Although the steel contraptions looked rigid, they were relatively lightweight and actually freed women from the heavy layers of petticoats favoured in previous decades. The problem, though, was their size. With a skirt circumference that could sometimes shoot past five metres, it was easy for the wearer to lose their spatial awareness. And what with open flames being the primary source of heat and light back then, the crinoline proved to be a bit of a fire hazard. If a woman’s skirt happened to brush past a candle, there was a good chance it would instantly burst into flames – a common occurrence since fabrics of the time were highly flammable. As a result, thousands of women died in fires thanks to these bulbous contraptions.

POISONOUS GREEN The colour green had a major moment during Victorian times. Back then, ‘Scheele’s Green’ and ‘Paris Green’ were all the rage; the pigments could be found in just about everything, from billowing gowns to wallpaper. And they were rich in arsenic, which is very, *very* poisonous. The emerald-hued pigments didn’t pose too much of a problem if garments remained dry, but Victorian dresses weren’t exactly lightweight or breezy – sweat a little, and the wearer was at risk of rashes, ulcers and other inconvenient maladies. But it was the fashion workers (surprise, surprise) who were most at risk of arsenic poisoning. In 1862, the satirical British magazine *Punch* published a cartoon titled “The Arsenic Waltz”, in which two dancing skeletons are depicted in fancy Victorian dress – one in a flower crown and gown, the other in a tuxedo. Only a few months before, a 19-year-old lass named Matilda Scheurer had passed away. The cause of death? Inhaling the green powder that she used to dust over fashionable artificial flowers at her workplace every day. We’ll spare you the grisly details.

MERCURIAL HATS The exact origins of the phrase ‘mad as a hatter’ are unknown, but it’s widely believed that it dates back to the strange behaviours exhibited by many hat-makers in the 18th and 19th centuries. At the time, milliners often crafted swish men’s hats using felt made from animal skins, and in order to create that felt, they had to use mercury nitrate. (You can probably figure out where this is headed.) It was quite common for milliners of the era to experience erethism – a neurological disorder caused by mercury poisoning. Symptoms ranged from shyness, irritability and excitability all the way to tremors, hallucinations, slurred speech and even psychosis. Takes a bit of the fun out of Lewis Carroll’s iconic 1865 character, the Hatter, doesn’t it?

RADIUM-PAINTED WATCHES Ah, yet another example of young, vulnerable workers ingesting toxic substances. After the Nobel Prize-winning power couple Marie and Pierre Curie discovered radium in 1898, it quickly became the miracle answer to every question. The luminous element was being used to treat cancer, after all, so what was the harm in wearing it and even drinking it? These days, the most famous victims of radium poisoning are known as the Radium Girls, who, in the early 20th century, were employed to paint the dials of watches and clocks with glowing paint. The workers, who were mainly young women with dainty, nimble fingers, would use their lips to keep their paintbrushes nice and pointy, ingesting radium in the process. They were assured by their bosses that it was safe to do so. The women’s clothing and hair would also get coated in the dust from the paint, and some even painted their fingernails and teeth in the stuff. Fast forward a couple of years to the 1920s and the Radium Girls began to die. It wasn’t a pleasant death – the radium literally rotted their jaws.

FATHER-KILLER COLLARS Turns out it wasn’t just fashionable women and factory workers who were visited by the Grim Reaper. Many gents of the 1800s met an untimely end, too, thanks to their high, stiff detachable collars. While these heavily starched collars were convenient when it came time to do the laundry, they could also easily choke men who had partaken in an evening of jolly eating and drinking. A swollen neck, a tight collar and a passed-out drunk man did not mix, it seems. The collars were so notorious that in Germany, they were nicknamed ‘Vatermörder’ – aka ‘father killer’.

DISTRESSING DENIM Those wacky Victorians had their fair share of deadly garments, but the fashion atrocities didn’t stop there. If you owned a pair of distressed jeans a decade or two ago, there’s a good chance that they were created using the sandblasting technique. Sandblasting is exactly how it sounds: workers blast denim with sand until the fabric is perfectly dishevelled. If particles from the sand end up in the lungs of a worker, they could, at best, experience shortness of breath and coughing, and at worst, death. While many companies and countries have banned sandblasting in recent years, a 2015 investigation by *Al Jazeera* revealed that Chinese factories working for popular global fashion brands were still using the technique. ✽

on the up

MELBOURNE'S PHOEBE GO IS RETURNING TO HER SOLO SONGWRITING ROOTS.

Words **Giselle Au-Nhien Nguyen**

You might recognise Phoebe Lou as the frontwoman of Snakadaktal, the indie pop band she started with her friends in high school, or as one half of Two People, the more experimental duo she and Joey Clough formed from the ashes of their former band. Now, she's stepping out on her own with her new solo project Phoebe Go. "I was daunted by the idea, but I felt in my gut that it was something I really needed to try to do, and that I would find a lot of meaning in doing," she says.

Melbourne's lockdowns provided the perfect opportunity for Phoebe to write some songs of her own (when she wasn't playing *Animal Crossing* like the rest of us). Writing by herself, rather than with or for a band, helped her connect with her inner child. "It felt like coming home to my 12-year-old self, sitting on my bed on the guitar and keyboard," she says. "It's very me in a very pure way."

The resulting EP, *Player* – which was released independently – is classic singer-songwriter fare, carried by Phoebe's beautiful vocals as she explores grief and anxiety. But even when the subject matter is sad, the listener feels safe in her hands. "It's different compared to my other projects, but this is what I would have been doing if I had started a solo project as a teenager – this sort of music is why music changed my

Photo Mike Ridley

life," she says, citing the folky sounds of Bright Eyes, Feist and The Shins as long-time faves and influences.

When it came to giving the solo venture a title, using her own first name was a no-brainer. The second half took a little longer to figure out, but a little mantra Phoebe tells herself provided the perfect solution. "I say this thing when I'm ready to leave the house or whatever – 'Phoebe go'. It means I'm ready," she says. "It has this energy about it that I just find so playful and impenetrable, so when I thought of the idea to call the project Phoebe Go, it felt instantly good. A lot of the songwriting is pretty heavy and I have a real melancholy character in some ways, but equally I'm a really happy and excitable person, and 'Go' captures that. It balances the whole thing out, and it gives me permission to do weird stuff and be myself."

Having been in the spotlight for almost half her life, Phoebe has learnt to be comfortable with growing in front of an audience. She laughs when discussing the fact that her awkward teen years are so publicly documented – "people's awkward formal photos aren't up on the internet" – but it's simply a part of her story. "It's kind of a cool thing to accept yourself in that way where we can look back and go, 'Yeah, that's where I was,'" she says. "It's nice to learn from those experiences and not feel squirmy about it."

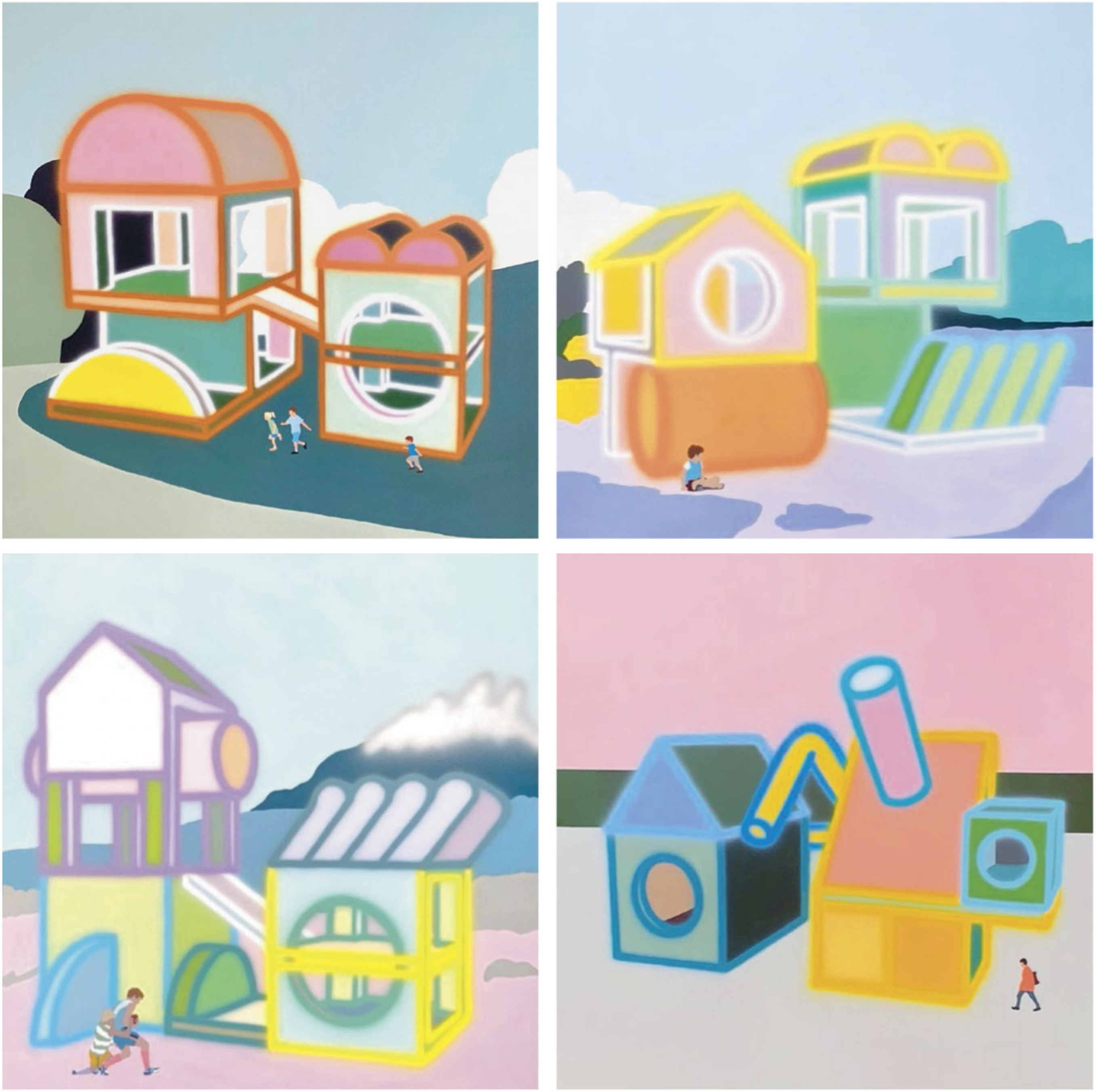
Phoebe compares listening to her teenage music to looking at an old photo. "I think it's really sweet," she says. "It's such a direct insight into what we were doing and where we were at and what our lives were. We would finish school and play some music and then go home and our parents would cook dinner for us. It's a different life, and you can hear that in the music. I remember being a teenager and how I felt back then. It has this bittersweet note to it when I listen back."

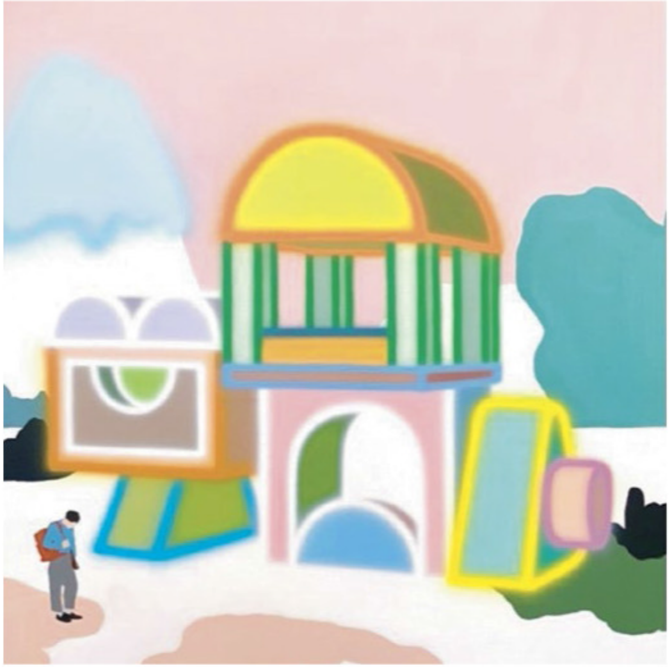
True to her name, Phoebe Go has already blasted off on the live circuit, having supported artists like Maple Glider and Hatchie, as well as playing at the industry showcase BIGSOUND. She's off to Europe this year, having nabbed a spot at The Great Escape in the UK, and is working away on an album.

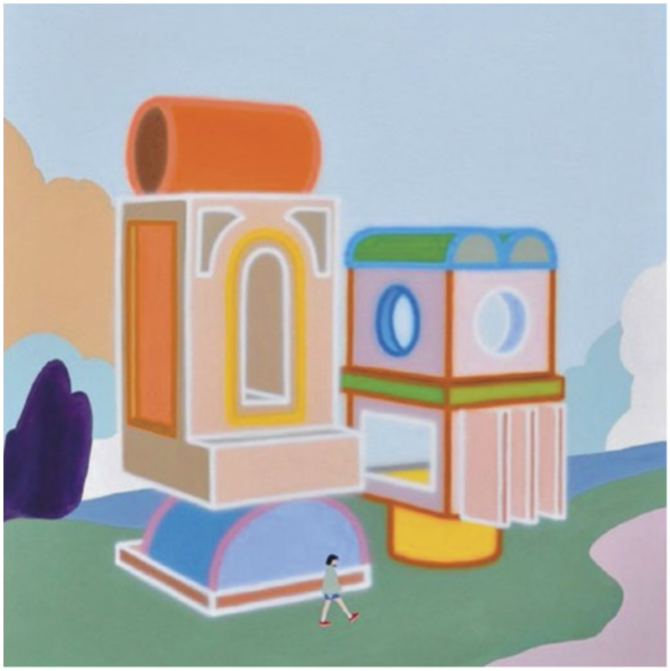
But there's plenty that keeps Phoebe busy at home, too. She's an avid cyclist and has an unexpected side gig. "Gaming is a bit of a thing for me, so I do a lot of that – I've just started streaming, actually, which is hilarious," she laughs. "I'm streaming *Fortnite* exclusively." So there you have it – if you can't catch a Phoebe Go show soon, you might be able to sneak a peek at her battling online. A woman of many talents. ✽

little lost worlds

YAN GUO PAINTS SURREAL,
CANDY-COLOURED PLAYGROUNDS.







Hi Yan, tell us a bit about yourself. I'm an emerging self-taught artist, born in Shanghai but raised in Melbourne. I have a background in urban planning and interior design and my art merges abstraction and realism. I've always had an interest in how our constructed environment can evoke memories and create a sense of alienation or belonging. Our environments are shaped by us, but also shape us.

What kind of techniques do you use? I use acrylic paints with brushes to lay down background colours, airbrushing with fluid acrylics to either outline elements or create gradients, and stencilling to incorporate patterns and people.

How did you begin playing around with airbrushing? I've always been interested in investigating different methods of paint application, and was finding that I would stop and admire the hazy lines of graffiti tags I'd see in the street. I decided to buy myself an airbrush and see whether I enjoyed the process and end result – which I did! There is something so compelling about the blurriness of sprayed lines. The linework has a distant, slow feeling, like a camera out of focus.

What was your first attempt at airbrushing like? Absolutely terrible! My first attempts were wobbly and I felt like you could literally see the lack of confidence in the linework! It took me a while to troubleshoot when things went wrong. Air flow, trigger pressure, paint fluidity, needle size... even the temperature will have an impact.

How do you get such precise lines? Just a steady hand and lots of practice! Airbrushing can be quite unforgiving and I'm a bit of a perfectionist, so if the airbrushed paint isn't even or straight, I'll redo that entire section.

What motivates you to start a painting? It can be different things, like architecture, the landscape, travel, a memory, or unexpected forms. I am often trying to capture a fleeting feeling, which means that my paintings are usually quite sentimental – like memories of seeing children jump rope in '90s suburbia or of flying over Kakadu National Park. Lately I've been finding myself inspired by fabric and the movement of patterns, so I'm looking forward to investigating that in my next series.

Are the buildings you paint based on real architecture? I will sometimes take cues from real architecture – the slope of a roof, the curves of a wall – but generally, the buildings are from my imagination.

How do you want viewers to feel when looking at your work? While my paintings are derived from my personal observations or memories, I want viewers to be able to imbue them with their own stories. I want them to feel as if they are discovering a little lost world through a surreal dream or catching a glimpse of a story that they don't know the ending of.

Where can we see more? Find me on Instagram at @yanbguo, where I post new works and provide details of upcoming exhibitions. ✽

THE DAWNHOUNDS SASCHA STRONACH
JOAN IS OKAY
OF WOMEN AND SALT
dead-end memories
HOW WE
FIRE
WOMAN
LUCKY TICKET JOEY BUI
The Henna Wars
MAISIE OMEBA CLARKE HOW DECENT FOLK BEHAVE
Erdrich
GROWING UP ABORIGINAL IN AUSTRALIA
PERSEPOLIS MARJANE SATRAPI
RESILIENCE
LEILA SLIMANI
UNLIMITED FUTURES
ENCLAVE CLAIRE G. COLEMAN
A PHO LOVE STORY
FOUL LADY FORTUNE
THE ASSAMA MURDERS
THE COURT OF MIRACLES KESTER GRANT
Everything Inside
MEET ME AT THE INTERSECTION
NATURAL DISASTERS
ACT YOUR AGE, EVE BROWN
THE WICKED FATE

Photo Phoebe Powell

spread the word

MARINA SANO LITCHFIELD AND JING XUAN TEO RUN AN INDIE BOOKSTORE DEDICATED TO BIPOC AUTHORS.

Words **Nathania Gilson**

What does it take for two university students to start a bookstore? "A lot of foolish optimism and blind faith in our abilities," says Marina Sano Litchfield. "For a long time, our whole game plan was: get books, sell books." Together with Jing Xuan Teo in 2020, Marina launched Amplify Bookstore, an independent online business dedicated to selling books by authors who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour. The goal? To make books from racially diverse perspectives easier to find, and to offer readers from those same backgrounds access to stories that reflect their lived experiences.

Xuan and Marina first met while studying a Master of Publishing and Communications. It was through their uni research that they discovered some disappointing stats on the book industry – like how in the last 20 years, the proportion of diverse books (across race, gender, sexual orientation and disability) published in a year has not exceeded an average of 10 per cent. Publishing clearly still has a diversity problem.

From the beginning, Marina and Xuan were interested in action over talk. "A lot of people affirmed that what we were doing with Amplify was great, but seemed reluctant to make change happen on a systemic level," Xuan says. She wanted to see people "put their money where their mouth is and do anything to properly change that". Originally, Amplify's co-founders considered pursuing a path towards helping other people tell their stories. "Marina wanted to start a publishing house but I told her that's a lot of money and experience that we don't have," Xuan explains.

So, the duo forged ahead with a bookstore. They set up Amplify's 'stockroom' in Marina's house, stacking boxes of books anywhere there was space: under the dining table, outside, up against the wall. "We organised all the books alphabetically by last name. So, if you ordered a book by an author with the last name starting with letters like T or R, we would have to carry all the boxes out from the top of the stack to get to the bottom box. And then rummage through it like a little rat," Xuan says.

In the early days of building their book list, they would comb through new releases and buy at least one copy of every book by a person of colour. They've since refined their selection, now that they've figured out who their customers really are. There are the allies who want to read up on the oppressions and difficulties marginalised groups face, as well as the people who are aware that they need to diversify their reading habits. Then there are the loyalists who reflect Amplify's current booklist. "It's the shes, the theys, and the gays," Marina says. "That's who we serve."

Amplify's bestsellers are queer books, books about people navigating mental illness and stories about living with disabilities. "Literally, any book that's trending on TikTok, too," Xuan adds. "Anything from 'unhinged sad woman' to 'enemies to lovers' or 'dark academia'. Those books will fly off the shelves."

Running the bookstore is still very much a labour of love, and when it comes to what motivates them to keep going, both Xuan and Marina cite the importance of support networks. "People have done more for us than our degree ever could," Xuan says. "It was also very easy to weed out the people who weren't willing to help us – especially at the start – before we'd created anything," Marina adds. "They felt the need to tell us there was no customer base for what we were doing. And we were like, 'Thank you. I will do my business myself.' Finding other people who are trying to make a similar change is very motivating – it makes us feel a lot less alone and a lot more like what you're trying to do is actually achievable and progressing."

Returning to their mission – as ambitious as it may be – helps them stay on track, too. "It's about getting the word out," Marina says. "Our store itself is not going to change the whole bestseller list in Australia, but making the mission known can have an impact. That really keeps us going despite us being incredibly tired 99 per cent of the time."

When asked about their future plans, Xuan and Marina both speak to the luxury of having one job (Amplify is now their side project alongside day jobs in book publishing), being able to pay themselves and not working within walking distance of their bedrooms. "We were very spurred on to try to do something tangible, to help change something, to make some sort of impact in a way that we could measure," Marina says. "Amplify felt like the thing we could do." ✽

XUAN AND MARINA'S TOP READS FROM 2022

- *Babel*, also known as *The Necessity of Violence: An Arcane History of the Oxford Translators' Revolution* by RF Kuang
- *Bloodmarked* by Tracy Deonn
- *Complicit* by Winnie M Li
- *Joan is Okay* by Weike Wang
- *Against Disappearance: Essays on Memory*, edited by Leah Jing McIntosh and Adolfo Aranjuez
- *Ophelia After All* by Racquel Marie
- *All is Well* by Mona Awad

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$370 each

dear long hair

IRINA WERNING HAS SPENT THE LAST 17 YEARS PHOTOGRAPHING LONG LOCKS ACROSS ARGENTINA.

Interview **Emma Do**

How did this project start for you? I started it in 2006. I was in the north of Argentina doing a project in the Andes Mountains where the Indigenous Kollas community lives. I kept bumping into girls with long hair, and I found myself photographing them. When I went back to Buenos Aires, I kept thinking of these pictures, so I started travelling more and actively searching for these girls. It was kind of a coincidence – I didn't really think of the project – it just chose me.

How common is it to see very long hair in Argentina? It's much more common here, especially in Indigenous communities, and across Latin America than in the rest of the world. This can be attributed to the hybrid culture and influence of Indigenous traditions. There are some things written about this subject, but the history is mostly oral, so you need to talk to communities, and they'll tell you things that you don't find anywhere else. For instance, there are many rituals to do with hair: when a baby is born, they don't cut their hair for two years. The first time they do cut it, it's like a ceremony and all the family and friends come and donate money for the little baby.

What does long hair symbolise in these communities? The connection to the land, and with your thoughts; the hair is like the extension of the thoughts. This is the same in nature when you look at the roots of the plants.

Do many men wear their hair long in Argentina? It's mostly just girls, but there is a town in Ecuador called Otavalo and there's a community there called Quechua where men have long hair. I'm going there this year to take photos and I think I will end the project with that.

Where has this project taken you? Around Argentina – mostly the north to the area of the Andes where there are more Indigenous communities. But also to Patagonia.

How do you find your subjects? In the beginning, I would go to a town and organise a long-hair competition so I could meet people. I actually did a competition not long ago, in the largest slum in Buenos Aires. Sixteen people came along: one man and 15 women (the one who wins has the longest hair in relation to the length of their body). A nine-year-old girl won – her hair was almost to her ankle. In the early days, I would also put ads with my phone number up in the market. And now I find people through Facebook groups.

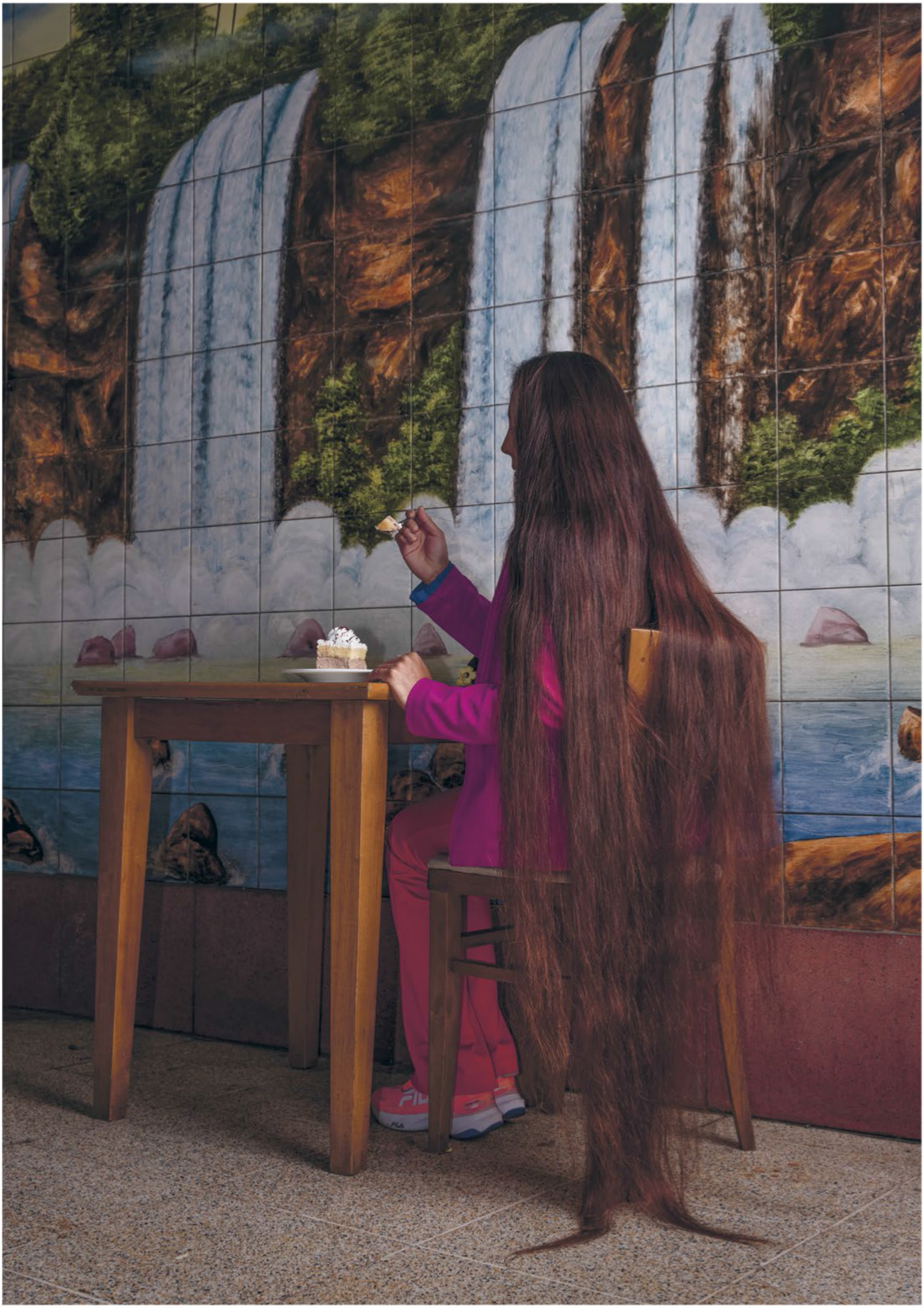
What are some of the interesting hair-related stories you've picked up? A lot of people keep their long hair because of a promise. They make a promise to the universe not to cut it until something happens, or until they manage to get something they wanted. Two years ago, I shot a story about a little girl who promised to cut her hair when school returned after lockdown. Usually when I photograph young girls, their long hair is about connection with their parents and grandparents. It passes from generation to generation; it's like a sacred bonding. And then there are all the struggles they have: headaches because of the weight of the hair, fear of the urban legend that someone is going to cut their hair on the bus…

Were there interesting care rituals? A few told me that they boil rosemary and then use that water to rinse their hair like a conditioner. It gives the hair a lot of shine and strength. But when they go out on the street, most of the time they have their hair up – they're not enjoying their long hair. So there are very few times when they really celebrate their hair.

How many girls have you shot for the project? It's impossible to know. Hundreds. Maybe 500.

How does it feel now that the project is coming to an end? I don't know, because even when I close the project, if I bump into a woman with very long hair, I'm going to photograph her. I'm not going to organise events to find people, but the project won't be 100 per cent closed.

Where can we see more? Online at irinawerning.com and on Instagram at @irinawerning. ✽



DETERGENTE ANTIBACTERIAL $110
PAÑAL $140
YERBA $190
amanda
MENTA $35
CEDRÓN $40
MENTA PEPERINA $60
SALVIA $30
MAÍZ 260 130 70
MANI tostado $160 $ K. MOLIDO $920 $ K.
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$170
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Clight

true or false with… frances o’connor

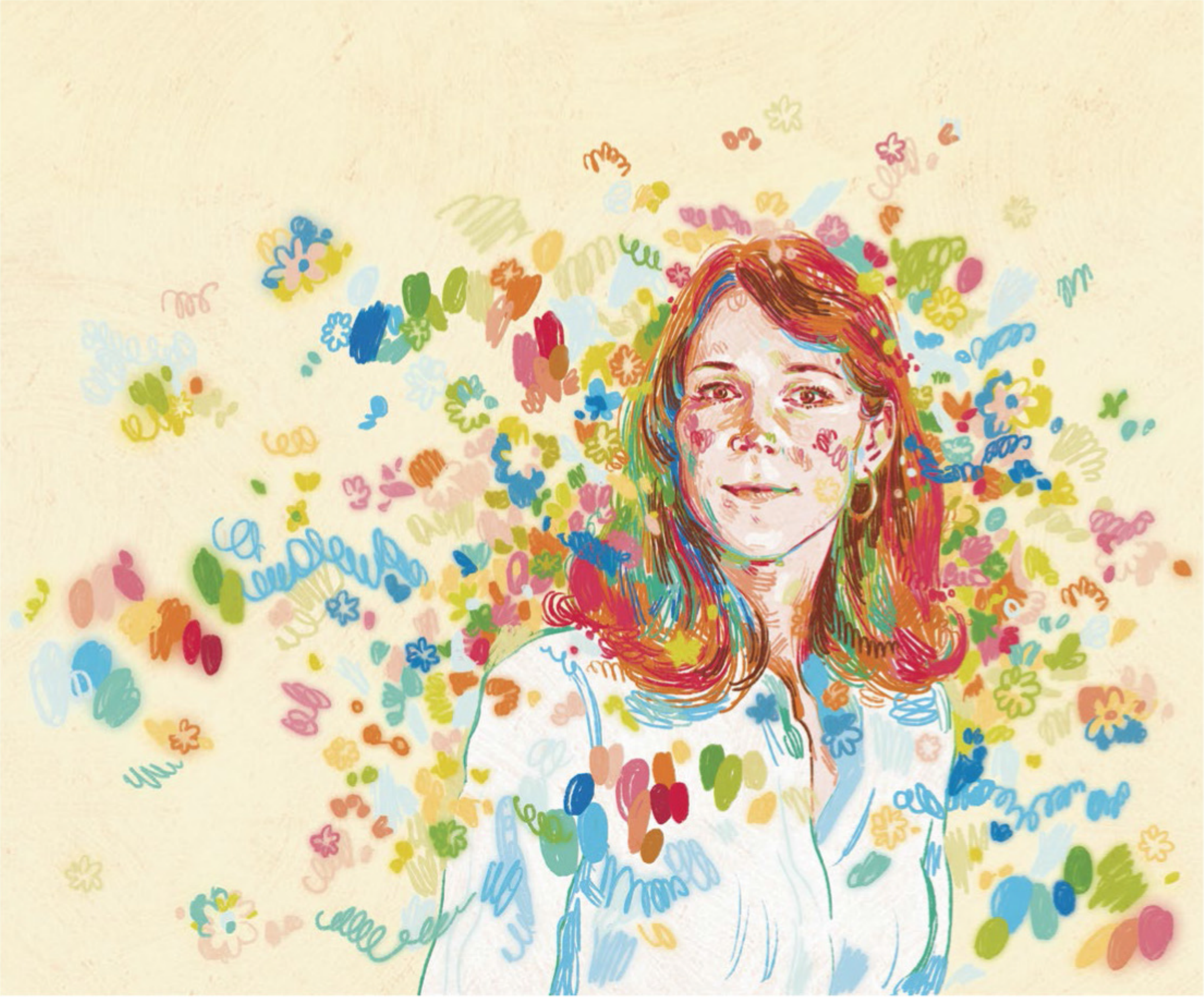
As told to **Kate Stanton**

Frances O’Connor is an Aussie actress making her directorial debut with *Emily*, an imaginative film about novelist Emily Brontë. We asked Frances about Hollywood, staying true to your creative self and upsetting Brontë purists.

EMILY IS YOUR FAVOURITE BRONTË SISTER True. I identify with her more. I’m an introvert; she was an introvert. And *Wuthering Heights* really transported me when I read it as a teenager. I grew up in the hills of Perth, and up there in the winter, it’s pretty wild and woolly. We didn’t have any houses around us, and I grew up with three sisters and a brother – we were pretty feral. Our little culture was similar to the Brontë culture; my parents were intellectuals and academics. I was always interested in creative writing – poetry or short stories – so I had a calling to honour that, and to tell Emily’s story as my first story. I knew I had it in me to make a film.

EMILY IS A BIOPIC False. I wasn’t interested in making a biopic; I was interested in exploring the Emily Brontë myth – what it is and what that means to us now. You could do a very even biopic – here’s Charlotte, here’s Emily, here’s Anne, then they did this – that would be amazing. But I’m actually interested in exploring female authenticity, female voice, and what that means to women now. This is a world where we’re exploring imagination and

Illustration Sophie McPike



creativity, and what it means to be different. Everything in the story is organic to who Emily really was. She was kind of a rebel, and she was interested in getting out and exploring, and telling stories exactly how she wanted to tell them. She wasn't worried about what people thought of her. I wanted to reflect on that.

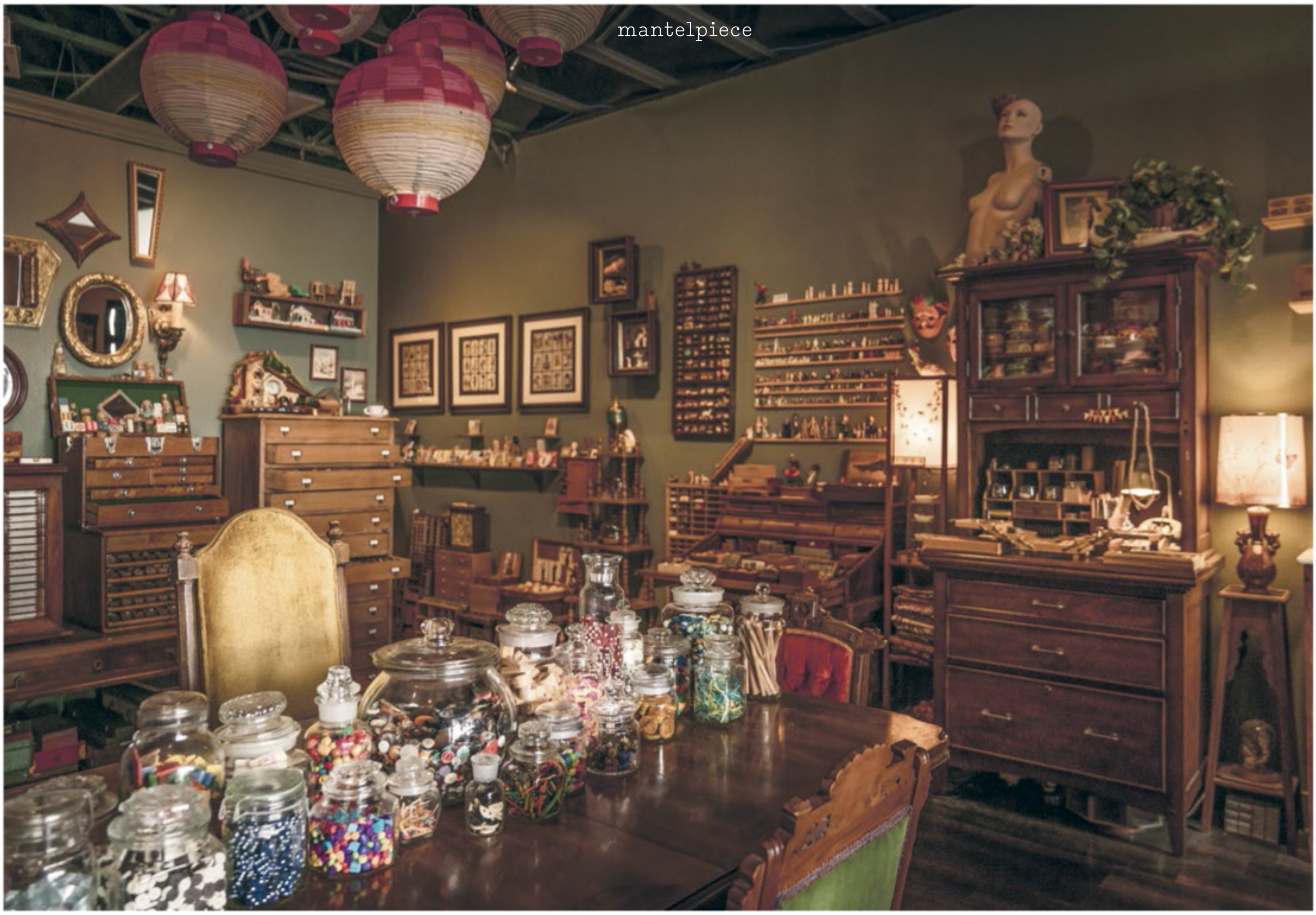
YOU WERE WORRIED ABOUT UPSETTING BRONTË PURISTS False. I knew going into the film that there would be some people who would be upset about it. But the people who run the Brontë parsonage loved the film. They all went along and cried at the end. There have been other people who've been upset that I've taken such a strong point of view on Charlotte or left Anne out. Everyone has very personal relationships with these sisters because they write so personally. So I don't take any offence to people having opinions. I think that's when good art happens – when you're not looking at these people from behind a glass.

DIRECTING IS HARDER THAN ACTING True. It is harder. It's a lot more responsibility. You've got this amazing relationship with a composer or your editor; you've got all these different creative people who you work with, and that's a different skillset. It feels very holistic to me. And it's your story; you're not telling someone else's. For me, that's more exciting and difficult.

STAYING TRUE TO YOURSELF IS EASY False. When I started out, I felt very true to my authentic voice and who I was. I think that's why I garnered attention early on in my career, because that was something I was very passionate about. But during the process of becoming an actress in Hollywood, some of those corners get ground down a bit. You can feel like you're part of the commercial machine of being an attractive person who can be a lead actress. That's something I wanted to say in the film as well: how do you hang on to yourself as a creative person when, say, the patriarchy falls in love with you... but they don't like *all* of you? They only like bits of you.

THE FILM INDUSTRY IS A BOYS' CLUB Somewhere in between. What I'm really excited about is that it's changing. I was a young actress in the '90s, when there were certain things you assumed were the status quo, and because of #MeToo, a lot of that is changing. I could probably count on one hand the number of female directors I've worked with, but I wouldn't want to say it's a boys' club. There are so many amazing women who have come forward in the last five years and have been given these incredible opportunities. It's actually a very exciting time for women in film, in front of and behind the camera.

Emily *is now in cinemas.* ✽



memories and miscellany

HAVE A SQUIZ AT LAS VEGAS'S OFFICE OF COLLECTING AND DESIGN (OCD), RUN BY FILMMAKER JESSICA ORECK.

Hi Jessica, what is OCD? The Office of Collecting and Design is part exhibition, part archive and part nostalgia machine. A collection of collections, it is devoted to the diminutive and the discarded.

What kind of collections do you house? Hundreds of drawers are filled with countless collections. Loose doll parts, pencil stubs, dice you can't play with, used pink erasers. On the main gallery table, we have candy jars overflowing with lost buttons, marbles and trinkets. The walls are lined with displays of rickety dollhouse furniture, empty matchboxes and lonely dominoes.

Are visitors allowed? Yes! The museum is open to the public – visitors are encouraged to sit and peruse books in the Reading Room, open all the drawers, look in all the boxes, take stuff out of jars and spend time inspecting and engaging with the collection. The museum also functions as a prop library for my film work. At night, we host events: craft nights, readings, tarot sessions, tiny concerts, dinner parties. And we also offer the space for rent as a backdrop for photo shoots.

What's the weirdest thing you have here? It's not the weirdest thing in itself, but I have a drawer full of casts of other people's teeth. When I was looking for retail spaces to rent, part of the reason I decided on this space was that in one dark corner was a giant jar, full of these cast teeth. Of course, I insisted on keeping them when I signed the lease. I think the landlord was a bit relieved.

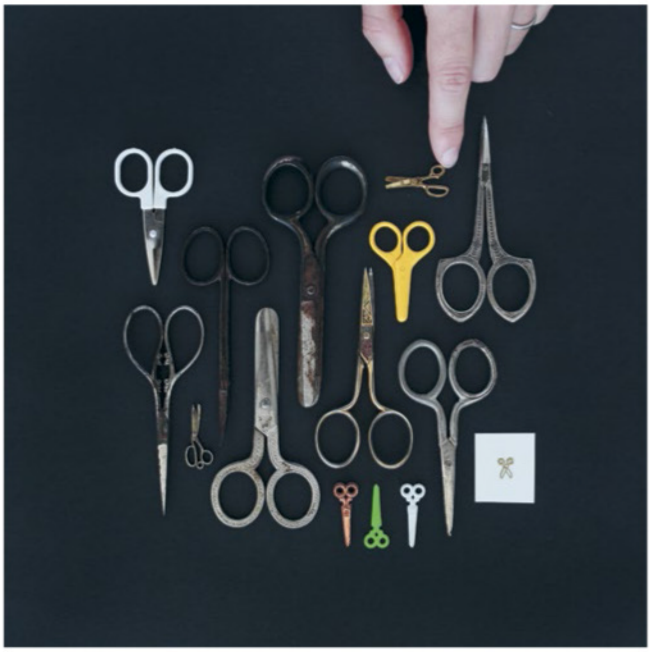
Some people might just call this junk. What would you say to them? They'd be entitled to call it that! I very specifically collect the miscellany of 'detritus' that filters through time. I am enthralled by the objects and remnants that fall through the cracks – caught somewhere in limbo between belongings and trash, the forgotten residues of other people's lives. I call these pieces 'residue of attention'. All the things they've witnessed, the love and use they've been afforded – people get to run their fingers through that when they visit. To me, it feels a little like magic.

You worked at a museum for 12 years. What did that teach you about making your own museum? I worked predominantly as a live animal keeper (at the American Museum of Natural History), so that doesn't really overlap with this space. But the many concurrent years I spent as a docent and volunteering in different curatorial departments certainly influenced the way I think about the veneration, preservation and presentation of all types of objects. I asked myself a lot of questions about what makes

Parapink
Pink Pet
Faber-Castell
Parapink
Pink Pearl
Pink Pearl
IMPERIAL
Pink Eraser
Pink Pearl
Perfect Pink
GENERAL'S

THE CIRCUS
ZEBRA
SAFETY MATCHES
FORT
BLACK CAT
SAFETY MATCH
Tiger
MATCHES
SPORT BRAND

LIFE SAVERS GUM
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT CHEWING GUM
Grape
Fruit Stripe
care-free SUGARLESS GUM
WRIGLEY'S JUICY FRUIT CHEWING GUM
cinnamon
DOUBLEMINT CHEWING GUM
Beech-Nut
orange GUM
Cherry
ADAMS SOUR



things sacred or historic, or, at its most basic, 'important'. Working with the public made me realise that the reactions of the visitors to the objects were sometimes much more inspiring than the objects themselves. That was a major factor in making this place such a hands-on experience. It isn't about the monetary value of an object – it's about the value of an object as a token of memory for each visitor. That feels too personal to put behind glass.

How many items are in the space? I have no idea. Possibly thousands in a single drawer. Despite my history with museums, I don't actually keep an inventory – it's all just in my head. I do keep a database of the donations, but everything else I just keep track of in my memory.

How do you know if an item deserves to be part of the collection? It's a very intuitive process; it's hard to explain (even to myself). It feels to be simply a matter of knowing that something is in the right place or not. Sometimes, when something is out of place, I walk into the space and it feels out of balance – like the whole room is tilted in one direction.

From where do you source all of these pieces? I have spent many delicious hours over the course of the last three decades hunting at flea markets, estate sales, beaches, trash dumps, swap meets, other people's grandparents' attics… I adore the hunt. One of my rules for the museum is that I won't buy anything online – I have to find it in person. Though we now accept donations, too.

Is there a particular reason why everything in the museum is so little? In part, this stems from having done most of my collecting on the road, so choosing items that fit in a suitcase is a plus. But more than that, I think I am just charmed by tiny things. Leslie Jamison said it best: "Miniatures are compelling because they are simultaneously alluring and inaccessible. They may be subject to our manipulation, but we can't ever go inside them. They simply aren't big enough to hold us. They represent possibility and impossibility at once."

What are some of your favourite pieces in the collection? My longest-running (and largest) collection is of 'unplayable' dice – those that would never pass muster here in Las Vegas as they might be poorly balanced, the pips slightly off, the corners chipped. The earliest item in the museum was given to me when I was 12 years old: a tiny wooden box with two tiny dice in it. It belonged to my great-grandmother and was given to me by my Aunt Creseda.

What do you love most about being a collector? I love watching people light up when they connect with a particular object in the museum. Almost everyone has a moment when they see something here and it unlocks some half-buried memory. I love getting to hear about their lives and collections, and in some cases, forming long-term friendships. It's been an incredible way to build community.

What's next for the museum? I'd love to move it into a shipping container and make it mobile. I want to be able to bring it to different places and meet an even wider variety of people. If anyone out there knows how to raise funds for a project like this, let's chat!

See more from the Office of Collecting and Design at officeofcollecting.com or on Instagram and TikTok at @office.of.collecting. ✽

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homebodies

claire ritchie and dean romeo live with their daughters, mila and freya, and dog fox in brighton, brisbane.

WORDS **GISELLE AU-NHIEN NGUYEN** PHOTOS **NATALIE MCCOMAS**

Claire Ritchie and Dean Romeo bought their house before they'd even set foot in it. "One of our really good friends went to the viewing and FaceTimed us," Dean says. "We trusted her, and we were just like, 'Let's do it, it feels right.'"

"We look for a vibe in a home more than anything – something that's got a good feel, a good energy to it – and this place had that," Claire says.

Luckily, their instincts were spot-on, and the pair have been living in the 1950s house in Brighton, Queensland, for three years, with their two daughters, Mila and Freya, and Fox the dog. Relocating from the inner north of Melbourne, they moved in the day they arrived in Queensland. "It's funny – we moved to Brisbane, but ended up buying a Melbourne-style house," Dean says. "It's very much like an old workers' cottage."

Sitting on a dead-end street, it backs onto wetlands and is just a few hundred metres from where their daughters go to school. "It's a completely different landscape to anything else I've ever experienced," Claire says. "It's very quiet and if you walk out into the backyard, you've just got a backdrop of huge trees."

The couple were looking for a place they could make their own, and both describe the house they bought as a "blank canvas". First cab off the rank was painting the lounge and dining room walls, which were originally bright blue. "It really hurt your eyeballs to be in that room," Claire remembers.

From there, Claire and Dean got stuck into the front and back gardens, creating a "human-sized fairy garden", including a fort for their daughters to play in. "I wanted to build a garden that could sustain itself," Claire says. "We turned the whole front lawn into a garden with lots of natives, and put in a bird bath and little stepping stones. Often all the kids from the street will be out front, making a giant soup in the bird pond."

In the backyard, an old tree usually has hundreds of birds perched within its branches. It's a different vibe in the evening, too. "At night, the sky fills up with bats, which can be quite cool to watch if you walk outside at the right time," Claire says.

Down the path is Claire's studio. "I wanted to do the same magical fairy garden vibe going down to the studio," she says. "By the time you get there, you've taken in the garden and feel really relaxed and ready to enter into a creative space."

The studio, six by three metres, was used as a fishing shed by the last occupant. It was important to Claire to have this space to create – previously, she was working from the lounge room.

"When we got in there, we basically just painted everything white to freshen the whole place up, and then put in all my things – shelving, a big cutting table, my two industrial sewing machines and computer space," she says. "It's big enough to have zones that I work in depending on what I'm doing; and I'm able to leave everything out, which is really nice – because if I don't leave things out, I forget about them."

As well as helping her get into her work, the garden and studio work in tandem to help her unwind from it. "I often stand in the doorway and stare at the garden because my eyes sometimes need a reprieve from the screen, and sewing is quite taxing," she says. "Stepping outside that studio space and being in the garden is really important."

SOW THE SEEDS FOR CHANGE
H&B

Koalas
AUSTRALIA
Greetings from Cessnock

> *“it’s funny – we moved to brisbane, but ended up buying a melbourne-style house. it’s very much like an old workers’ cottage.”*

Inside the house, Mila and Freya are in a split bedroom. “On Friday nights they have sleepover night and sleep in the same bed together, and play in the big room,” Claire says. “But they’ve got their separate sleeping areas, which gives them a bit of responsibility.”

Claire hand-painted bright, colourful murals onto her daughters’ bedroom walls. Freya’s bedroom has yellow flowers on the walls, and one of Claire’s favourite finds – a koala-print tea towel – above the bed. “I love that tea towel. The minute I found it, I was like, ‘I have to frame it.’ Freya has a bit of a thing for koalas, and it fits so nicely in her room, which is really warm and sunny and happy.”

Mila’s room has one of Claire’s paintings on the walls as a mural, and was a collaborative effort when it came to styling. “Mila’s room very much is things that she wants in there – she’s quite confident with how she wants her room to feel,” she says. “I got a little vintage desk with a map on it, hung some of her artwork up, and got this little mattress with cushions on the ground to be a little reading nook, which was something she suggested. She comes to me with an idea or suggestion and I’ll say, ‘Cool, I’ll go have a hunt.’” Because Claire tries to buy as many things as she can secondhand, it can sometimes take a little while. “You have to wait to find a piece that will work, but I kind of like that about it – you value it a bit more because it’s special and unique.”

Her love for secondhand is seen all around the house, with furniture and knick-knacks from op shops, markets, vintage shops, Facebook Marketplace and beyond. “It comes from finding everyday objects that people don’t want and bringing them together in little collections around the house,” Claire says. “I have a mid-century cabinet that I bought from the Melville Markets in Perth when I was 19. I’ve carried it around to every place we’ve lived.”

There are also works from local and international artists around the house, but the couple agrees on their favourite – a laser-cut fox with stitched embroidery by their friend, furniture designer Richard Greenacre, which hangs in their living room. The artwork came from an exhibition Claire curated in Perth when she worked at the Little Creatures brewery.

“I went upstairs and saw Richard’s piece,” Claire remembers. “Dean had already been up there and when we met at the stairwell, at the same time we were like, ‘Have you seen that fox?’ That’s a really special piece for both of us.”

Though the house is now a home and has been modified to suit the family’s needs, there’s still a little way to go with renovation projects. Claire describes the kitchen as “higgledy-piggledy – whoever was here previously has put in three different types of kitchen cabinetry, so none of that matches, which makes my eyes twitch daily.”

“The bathroom’s atrocious,” Dean adds with a laugh, and Claire agrees. “It’s definitely not a room that I love hanging out in, and I feel like it should be, because it’s a place where you go to relax and get ready for the day. It’s really rundown and the tiles need to be redone, but it’s nice to have things to look forward to doing, and there’s no rush to get that stuff done either – we just try to enjoy all the bits in between and not try to feel pressure to have everything perfect.” ✽

Claire and Dean’s lovely cottage is featured in SPACES Volume Six, a collection of homes from around Australia where creative people live, work and play. Order a copy online at frankie.com.au/spaces6, or find a stockist at frankie.com.au/find

Photo Jenny Huang

flourless chocolate meringue cake

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT THIS CROWD-PLEASER IS EASY-AS TO WHIP UP.

Words and recipe **Claire Saffitz**

Meringue is a magical mixture of egg whites and sugar that can be used in many ways. Not only does it look appealing on top of the cake, it also bakes into a light and crispy shell that yields to the rich crumb. This cake is dairy- and grain-free.

ACTIVE TIME: 30 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 1 hour 40 minutes, plus time to cool

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: 22cm springform pan, hand mixer

Serves 10

INGREDIENTS

- Neutral oil for the pan
- 285g semisweet chocolate (64%–70% cacao), coarsely chopped
- 4 1/2 tbsp (85g) neutral oil, such as grapeseed or avocado
- 60ml cup brewed coffee
- 1 1/2 tsp sea salt flakes or 3/4 tsp table salt, plus a pinch
- 5 large eggs (250g), whites and yolks separated, at room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- 200g sugar
- 70g almond flour, sifted if lumpy

CAN I . . .

Make it ahead? Yes. The cake, well wrapped and stored at room temperature, will keep for up to four days, but it's best eaten on the first or second day while the meringue topping is still crispy (it will soften over time).

Make this nut-free? Yes. Although it's not a common item in most supermarkets, sunflower seed flour is a good nut-free alternative to almond flour.

Use a stand mixer instead of a hand mixer? Yes. Combine the egg whites and salt in a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment and proceed with the recipe as written, noting that the meringue will whip faster and be easier to overbeat in the stand mixer.

What's for Dessert
Claire Saffitz

This is an edited extract from What's for Dessert *by Claire Saffitz, published by Murdoch Books, rrp $55. Scan the QR code to see more frankie faves.*

HOW TO

PREHEAT THE OVEN AND PREPARE THE PAN Arrange an oven rack in the centre position and preheat the oven to 175°C. Brush the bottom and sides of a 22cm springform pan with oil, making sure to coat the sides all the way to the rim. Line the bottom with a silicone or parchment round and brush with more oil, then set the pan aside.

MELT THE CHOCOLATE MIXTURE Fill a medium saucepan with about 2.5cm of water and bring to a simmer over medium heat, then reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. In a large heatproof bowl, combine the chocolate, oil, coffee, and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt and set it over the saucepan, taking care that the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water (this is called a double boiler). Stir occasionally with a heatproof flexible spatula until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is completely smooth, then remove the bowl from the heat and set aside.

WHISK IN THE YOLKS, SUGAR, AND ALMOND FLOUR Add the egg yolks, vanilla, and 50g of the sugar to the chocolate mixture and vigorously whisk to combine. Whisk in the almond flour until thoroughly combined. It will look broken and separated, which is OK! Add 60ml water and whisk vigorously until the mixture comes back together and looks smooth and glossy. Set the bowl aside.

MAKE THE MERINGUE In a separate clean, large, non-plastic bowl, with a hand mixer, beat the egg whites and a pinch of salt on medium-low speed until the whites are broken up and frothy, about 20 seconds. Increase the speed to medium-high and continue to beat until the whites are foamy and opaque, about 30 seconds, then gradually add the remaining 150g sugar in a slow, steady stream, beating constantly. Once all the sugar is added, increase the speed to high and continue to beat just until you have a dense, glossy meringue that holds a stiff peak. Try not to overbeat, or the whites will take on a dry, grainy texture and be difficult to incorporate.

MAKE THE BATTER Scoop a heaping cup of the meringue and set it aside for swirling on top of the cake. Scrape about half of the remaining meringue into the bowl with the chocolate mixture and fold gently until just a few streaks remain. Scrape in the rest of the meringue and fold just until you have a light, airy, evenly mixed batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, then dollop spoonfuls of the reserved meringue across the entire surface. Use a skewer or toothpick to swirl the meringue into the batter and vice versa. Swirl a little or a lot; it's up to you.

BAKE Bake the cake until the surface is risen and cracked, the meringue is light golden, and a skewer or cake tester inserted into the centre comes out shiny but clean, 1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven and place on a wire rack, then immediately run a paring knife or small offset spatula between the very top of the cake and the rim of the pan all the way around to loosen any areas that may be stuck (this will help the cake settle evenly as it cools). Let the cake cool completely. Cut around the sides again to loosen the cake, then remove the outer ring of the pan. ✽

MARCH

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	NOTES
		01	02	03	04	05	
06	07	08	09	10	11	12	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30	31			

APRIL

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	NOTES
					01	02	
issue 113 on sale 03	04	05	06	good friday 07	easter saturday 08	easter sunday 09	
easter monday 10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
24	anzac day 25	26	27	28	29	30	

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a brief history of the ponzi scheme

AKA HOW TO SPOT A SCAMMER AT 50 PACES.

Words **James Shackell**

How would you like to make money – fast? I thought you might. See, I've discovered this amazing new investment opportunity, and it pays 30 per cent annual returns! How? Don't worry about the how. The how is unimportant. I could show you all these charts and diagrams and things, but all you need to know is that it works. And I can prove it – look, I'm standing in front of a Lamborghini! If that doesn't scream 'legitimate business opportunity', I don't know what does.

Welcome to the lucrative world of Ponzi schemes, where the money flows like water... until it doesn't.

Perhaps the most infamous case is that of Charles Ponzi – the guy after whom the scheme was named. In the early 1920s, Ponzi cooked up the perfect money-making plot. He told investors that he'd discovered how to take advantage of fluctuating currency values to buy and sell postage coupons, promising victims a 50 per cent profit within 45 days and 100 per cent profit within 90 days. And, initially, investors did see huge returns. Of course, this money wasn't coming from any actual trading – it was simply the deposits from new suckers getting shuffled around. Basically, Ponzi robbed Peter to pay Paul. Then he robbed Paul.

The *Boston Post* eventually uncovered Ponzi's scheme, and the whole thing quickly unravelled. When the dust settled, Charles Ponzi had stolen around $20 million from investors (equivalent to about $300 million today).

Of course, he wasn't the first. As economist John Kenneth Galbraith once said, "The man who is admired for the ingenuity of his larceny is almost always rediscovering some earlier form of fraud." In Ponzi's case, this was literally true. A woman named Sarah Howe actually pioneered this scheme way back in 1879. A former fortune teller, Howe founded a savings bank in Boston called the Ladies' Deposit Company and targeted single women, promising an eight per cent interest rate for their deposits each month. When asked by reporters how this was possible, the company said, "We never disclose the methods by which we do business." Always a comforting response.

Then there was Chicago's Leo Koretz, a law-school graduate who, by 1917, was selling stock in the 'Bayano River Syndicate', an operation that Koretz claimed owned five million acres of oil-rich land in Panama. When investors eagerly went to Panama to see the goldmine themselves, they found nothing but a river of crocodiles. Howe and Koretz's 'methods' turned out to be classic Ponzi schemes: old investors were paid with the deposits from *new* investors. Until suddenly they weren't, and the whole thing fell apart.

You might be wondering what the difference is between a Ponzi scheme and a pyramid scheme. While the two are closely related, they're not identical. A Ponzi scheme will 'invest' your dosh and promise an unbelievable reward. You entrust your money to a 'portfolio manager', but if you ever want your money back, you're paid with the incoming funds of *new* investors.

A pyramid scheme, on the other hand, promises commission from working your social connections. A scammer might first offer a group of potential investors an opportunity (maybe the chance to sell a product for massive profits), and those investors are then incentivised to go and recruit *more* investors, and so on and so on. The money from new investors (the base of the pyramid) flows upwards to earlier investors (the top of the pyramid) and, eventually, to the scammer themselves. Nothing is actually being *created* – money just moves around.

Ponzi and pyramid schemes quickly implode when new investors start drying up, or the scammer spends the scheme's money faster than it's coming in. It's a delicate bubble which requires oxygen (new money) to keep growing. But it always pops eventually, and when it does,

investors lose everything, right down to the shirts on their backs, and the scammer either flees to some handy, tropical, non-extradition country, or gets thrown in white-collar jail.

You might think, given that these scams have been around for at least 150-odd years, investors would have cottoned on by now. But if anything, pyramid and Ponzi schemes just became more sophisticated and, in some ways, formed the basis of the modern financial market. We don't see them anymore because they're in front of us all the time. Hiding in plain sight.

Example: in the late '90s and early 2000s, American financier Bernie Madoff constructed the most elaborate and profitable Ponzi scheme of all time – a 'wealth management' business worth about US$64.8 billion. The scheme ran for nearly 20 years, and its victims included high-profile, wealthy, very clever people (Madoff was later sentenced to an eye-watering 150 years behind bars). Author Elie Wiesel called Madoff a "god". His investors thought he was a genius. Of course, Madoff was neither. If he was anything, he was a symptom of a bigger problem; or as Michael Moore described him, the "scab on the wound".

"If Ponzi schemes are such a bad thing, then why have we allowed all of our top banks to deal in credit default swaps and other make-believe rackets?" Moore wrote in 2009, in the wake of the global financial crisis. "Why did we allow these same banks to create the scam of a sub-prime mortgage?"

This is what happened to fraudulent investment schemes: they went mainstream. And they're tricky to spot, even for experts, because they appear legitimate and profitable right up to the moment when global markets are crashing down around your ears. So what should you, the average investor on the street looking for a dividend, be wary of? If a friend or family member starts advising you on how to become an 'entrepreneur', what are the red flags to watch out for?

Well, if an investment opportunity presents itself as "definitely not a pyramid scheme", it is almost certainly a pyramid scheme. That's the financial equivalent of opening a sentence with, "I'm not racist, but…" An upfront joining fee or claims of 50 or 100 per cent returns should also tip you off.

When it comes to multi-level marketing companies (think Avon, Tupperware, Herbalife), the experts suggest doing your research. MLMs, in which members flog products and recruit sellers beneath them, are legal – so long as most profits come from selling product and not signing up newbies. But critics argue that the worst MLMs can quickly devolve into straight-up pyramid schemes. In general, scammers will never give you any specifics about the investment process, or how the scheme actually works. They'll just sell you a big bowl of FOMO.

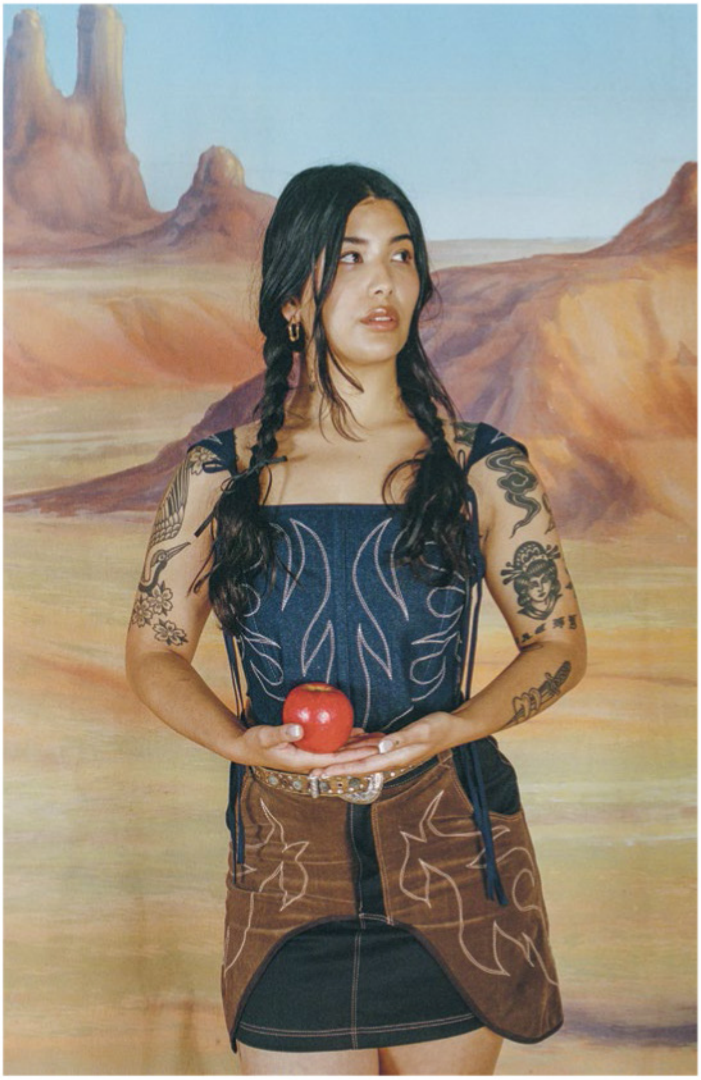
This is often the secret ingredient for Ponzi and pyramid schemes – they pitch themselves as exclusive. They don't allow just anyone to invest. This creates what former US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan called "irrational exuberance", where people see others making huge profits and figure this means the investments are safe. As someone who has bought quite a lot of crypto off the recommendation of his Uber driver, I can attest that this is a thing.

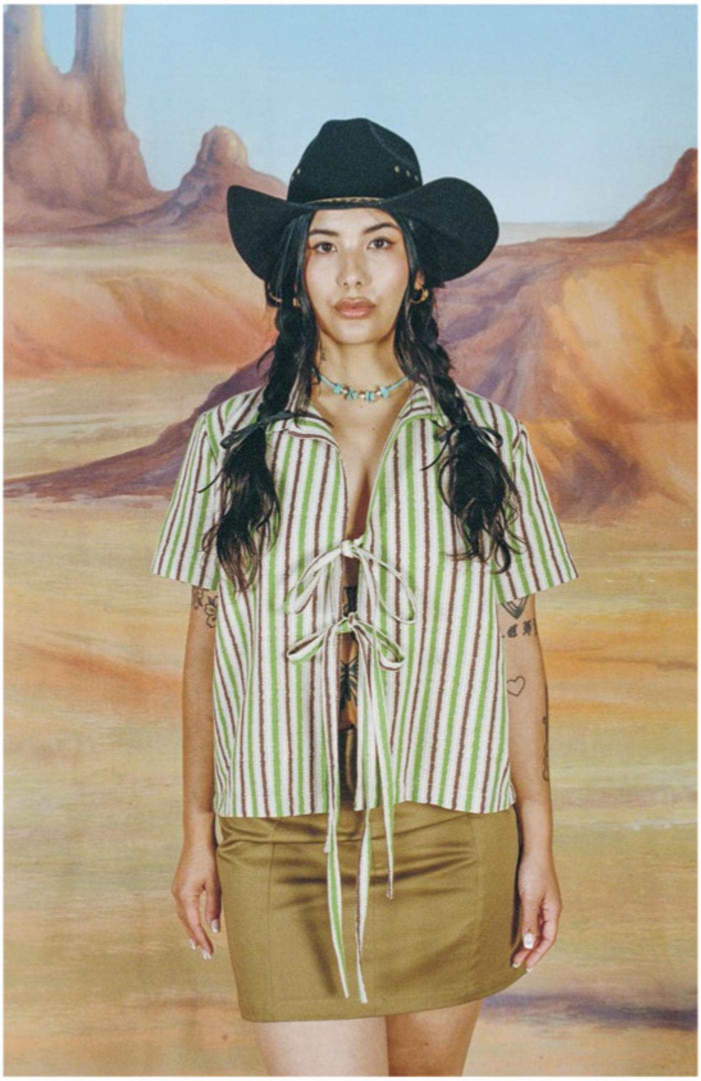
So, if you feel yourself becoming "irrationally exuberant" about a guy on YouTube standing in front of a Lamborghini, promising you a risk-free way to make lots and lots of money, close the tab and quietly back away. If it were that easy to beat the market, there wouldn't *be* a market anymore. Ponzi schemes basically prove the old adage: if something sounds too good to be true, that's because it is. ✽

a little bit country

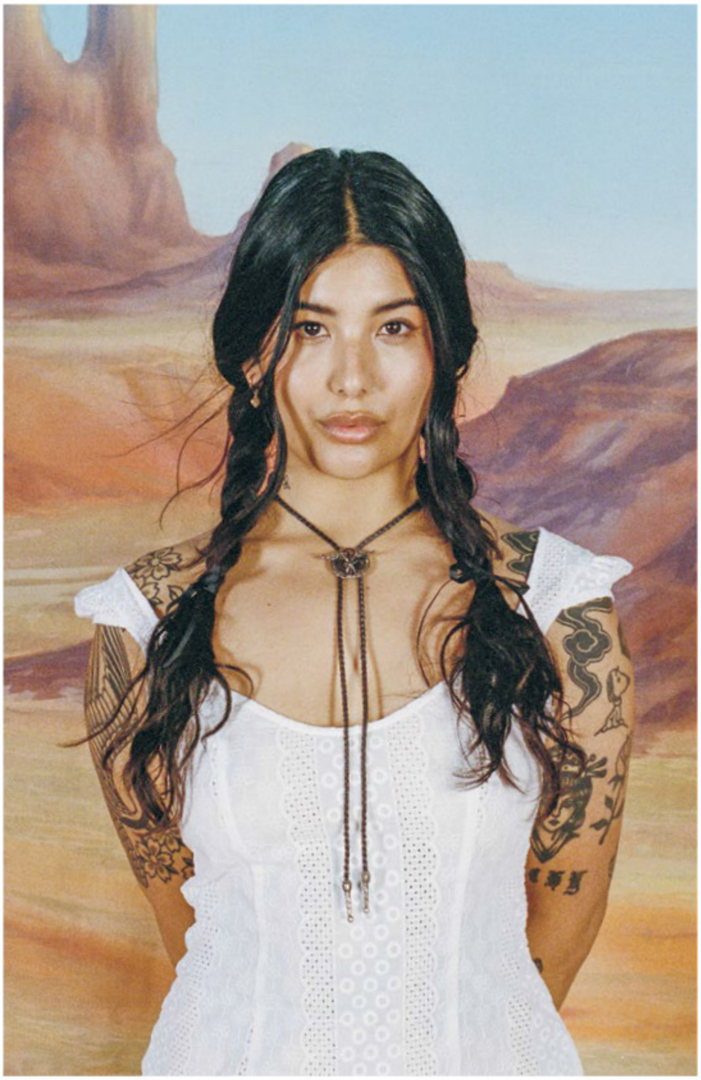
PHOTOGRAPHY **LEKHENA PORTER**
STYLING **CECILE HUYNH**
HAIR AND MAKE-UP **ELEANNA HINGSTON**
MODEL **AKI AT STONE STREET AGENCY**
ART DIRECTION **ALICE BUDA, EMMA DO**
PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT **IZZY BUTTLE**
STYLIST ASSISTANT **PAUL SUMMERS**

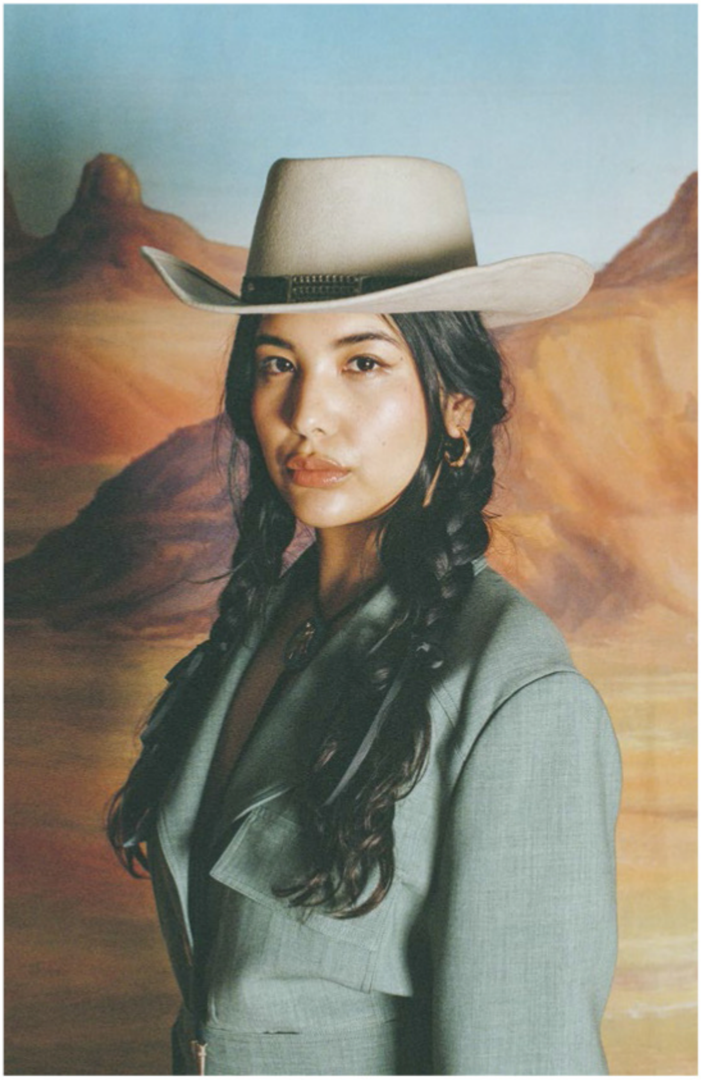
Previous spread: Sister Studios Lola dress, rrp $290, sisterstudios.com.au. Kannava Jewels Tiny Heart sleeper in gold with emerald stone, rrp $140, Tiny Squiggly Sun sleeper in gold, rrp $80, kannavajewels.com. ROC Boots Galveston boot in black/natural, rrp $279.95, rocboots.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com **Above left:** Par Moi Spalla halter in peanut, rrp $189, Panneau skirt in peanut, rrp $189, par-moi.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com **Above right:** Muse the Label Mari dress in pink floral, rrp $395, musethelabel.com. V.Rosa Chunky Alba hoops, rrp $90, v-rosa.com. Global Vintage Collective vintage cowboy hat, rrp $150, vintage bolo tie, $70, globalvintagecollective.com **Opposite page:** Sister Studios Bella Scrunchie top, rrp $220, Bella pleated miniskirt, rrp $230, sisterstudios.com.au. Par Moi Cuore huggie earrings, rrp $69, par-moi.com. Bared Footwear Myna boots in black, rrp $429, bared.com.au





Opposite page: Blanca Denis blazer in slate, rrp $359, Moscow pants in slate, rrp $219, blanca.shop. V.Rosa Chunky Alba hoops, rrp $90, v-rosa.com. Global Vintage Collective vintage cowboy hat, rrp $150, vintage cowboy boots, rrp $225, globalvintagecollective.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com **Above left:** Lucinda Babi Siren corset in denim, rrp $340, Gateway skirt, rrp $290, lucindababi.com. V.Rosa Chunky Alba hoops, rrp $90, v-rosa.com **Above right:** Par Moi Lila shirt, rrp $229, Panneau skirt in peanut, rrp $189, par-moi.com. V.Rosa Rosa Serafini hoops in coffee, rrp $89, v-rosa.com. Reliquia Tropea necklace, rrp $149, reliquiacollective.com. Global Vintage Collective vintage cowboy hat, rrp $175, globalvintagecollective.com





Above left: Sister Studios Lola dress, rrp $290, sisterstudios.com.au. Kannava Jewels Tiny Heart sleeper in gold with emerald stone, rrp $140, Tiny Squiggly Sun sleeper in gold, rrp $80, kannavajewels.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com **Above right:** Blanca Denis blazer in slate, rrp $359, blanca.shop. V.Rosa Chunky Alba hoops, rrp $90, v-rosa.com. Global Vintage Collective vintage cowboy hat, rrp $150, globalvintagecollective.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com **Opposite page:** Par Moi Spalla halter in peanut, rrp $189, Panneau skirt in peanut, rrp $189, par-moi.com. Reliquia Sobia earrings, rrp $149, reliquiacollective.com. Rose Chong Costumiers bolo tie, available for hire, rosechong.com. Radical Yes Astral T-bar boot in black, rrp $299, radicalyes.com.au. Stylist's own socks ✽

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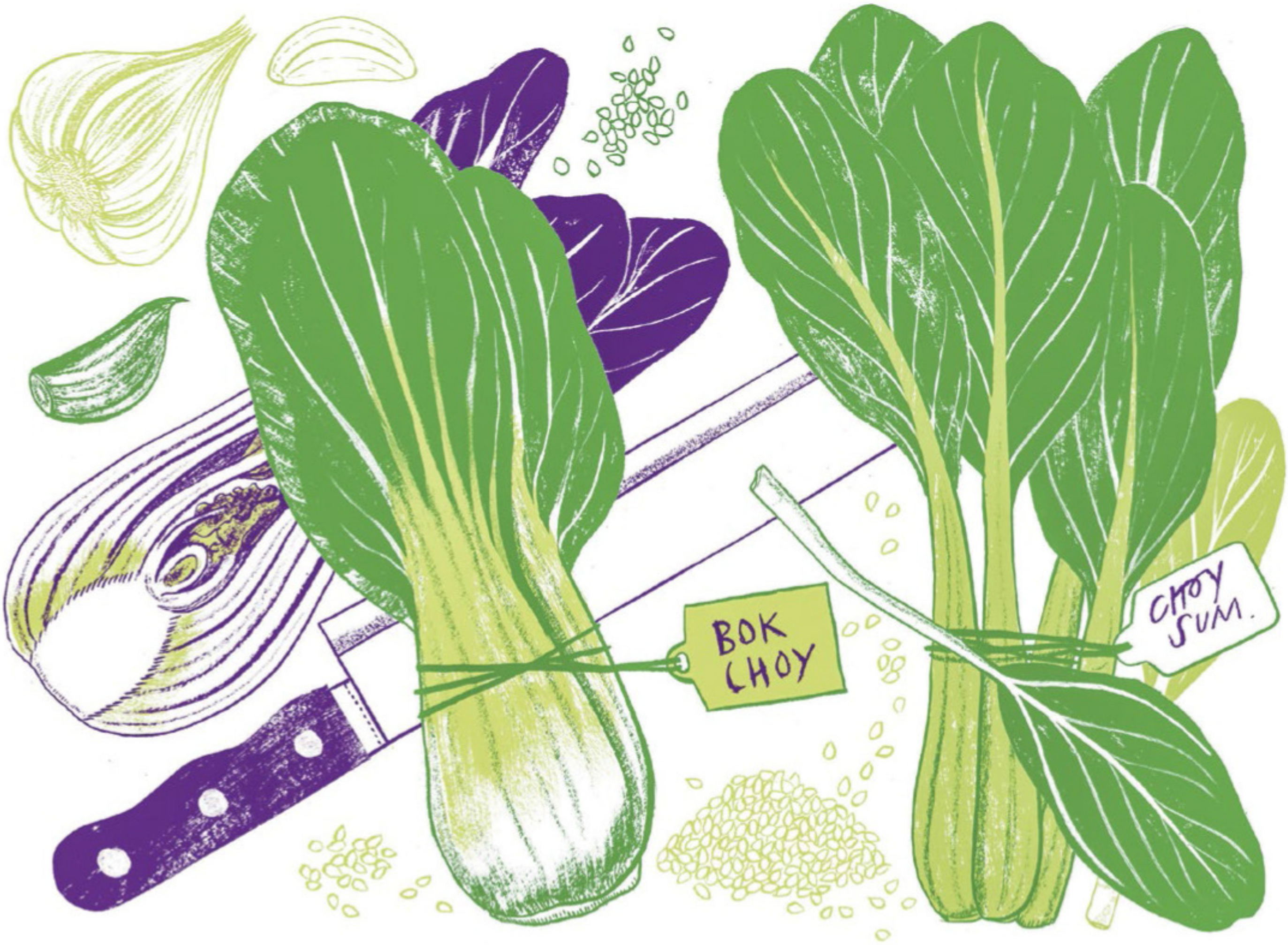


know your asian greens

BORED OF BROCCOLI AND SPINACH? IT'S TIME TO HIT UP YOUR LOCAL ASIAN SUPERMARKET FOR SOME LEAFY GREENS.

Words **Giselle Au-Nhien Nguyen**
Illustrations **Alice Pattullo**

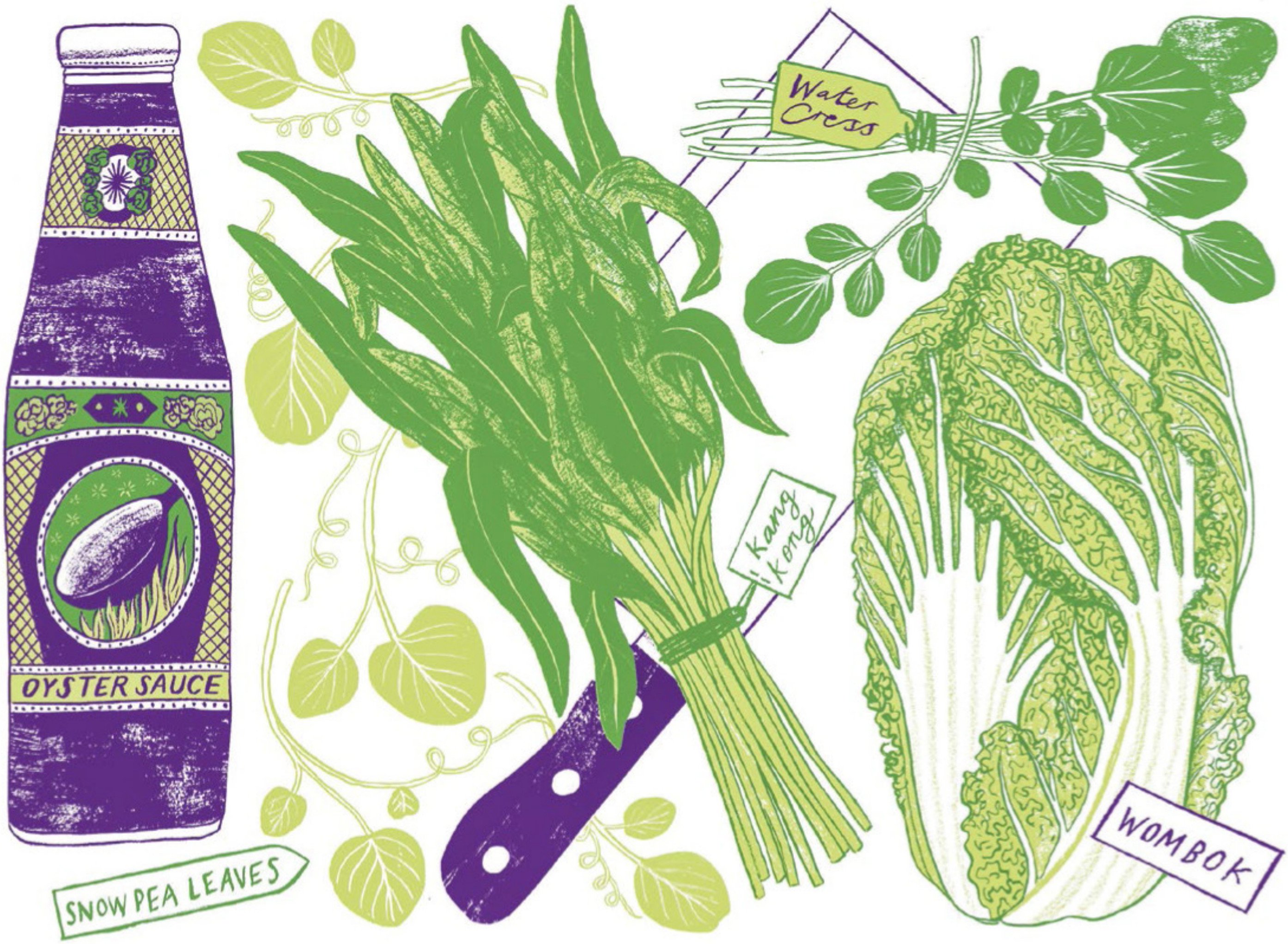
BOK CHOY

Aka: buk choy, pak choy

You might have seen this one sold under a number of different names, but just to clear up any confusion: they're all the same thing. There are three main varieties: the big bok choy, which has crisp white stems and darker, slightly crinkled leaves; baby bok choy, which is a smaller version of the aforementioned; and finally, what most people think of as bok choy (and what the major supermarkets call 'pak choy') – the one with light green stems and spoon-shaped leaves. The entire bok choy is edible and is rich in vitamins C and K. These greens have a sweet taste and are a great addition to stir-fries or noodle soups, though watch your mouth – those long leaves can get hot!

CHOY SUM

Choy sum translates literally to 'heart of the vegetable' in Cantonese (many Asian veggies were first brought to Australia by southern Chinese migrants during the gold rush, which is why we still refer to them by their Cantonese names). Also known as Chinese flowering cabbage, choy sum is distinctive for its yellow flowers, which are also edible – though not all bunches are sold with flowers. Blanching choy sum and serving it with garlic and oyster sauce is a common way you'll find this vegetable prepared in restaurants. While it looks similar to Chinese broccoli, you can differentiate it by its lighter green leaves and more tender stems. Choy sum is sweet and juicy and cooks in half the time as bok choy.



SNOW PEA LEAVES

It's not just the snow pea that's delicious – its leaves are a great addition to your cooking repertoire, too. There are several theories about why they're called snow peas – some believe it's because when the light shines through the pod, the vegetable appears white, while others think it's because snow peas grow so early in the springtime that the cold doesn't bother them (loving this new adaptation of *Frozen*). The leaves are rich in folic acid (B9) and vitamin C, and are good for your eye health and immune system. Try them stir-fried with garlic for an alternative to your more commonly used Asian greens, or just munch 'em raw.

KANGKONG
Aka: water spinach, kangkung, ong choy

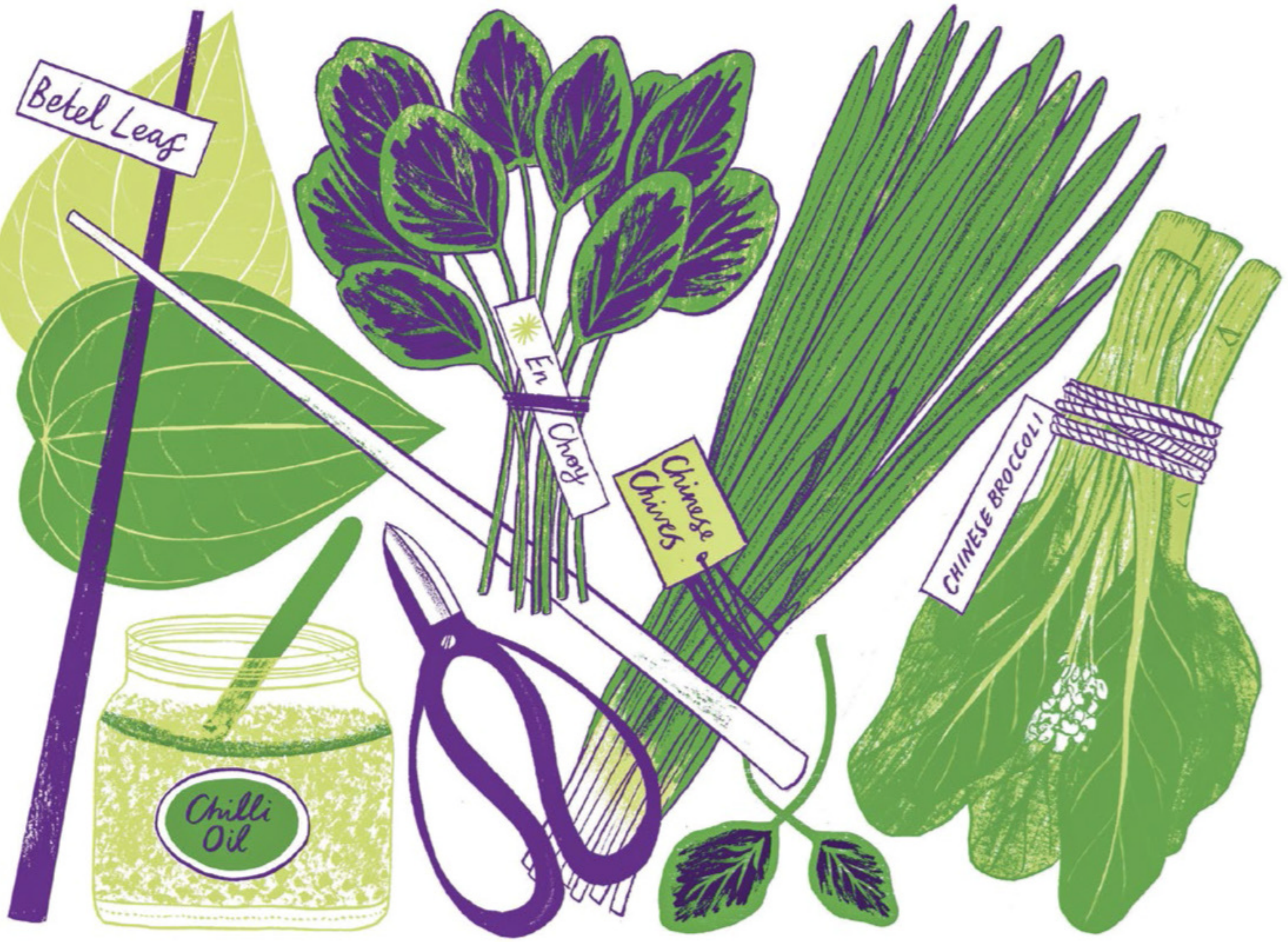
Kangkong is native to South-East Asia. It's recognisable by its long, arrowhead-shaped leaves, and while it's considered a weed in some parts of the world, it is commonly used in many Asian cuisines, including Chinese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Filipino and Sri Lankan. Both the leaves and tender stems are edible, though you'll want to discard them if they're a bit woody. Stir-frying kangkong with garlic, onion and spices is a cheap, easy and delicious way to enjoy this veg (be prepared to see your gigantic bunch shrink down in the pan). Kangkong has similar health benefits to bananas and oranges – it's rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants.

WATERCRESS

Watercress is eaten in both Western and Eastern cuisines and is a relative to fellow piquant veggies such as the mustard plant, radish and wasabi. While you may have come across watercress in salad form at Western cafés and restaurants – its peppery leaves make for a great, fresh bite – in Chinese cooking, it's more often stir-fried or added to soups. You'll find it in the Asian grocer sold in a bunch, usually in a small container of water. Watercress is rich in vitamins C and E, iron phosphate and calcium, making it a nutritional pocket rocket. In Australia, it's in season from April to October, growing best near running water.

WOMBOK
Aka: Chinese cabbage, napa cabbage

Wombok – just like regular cabbage – comes in red and green varieties, but the difference ends there: it's much milder and sweeter than its European counterpart. It's been around since the 15th century, and grows best in mild weather with short days. Wombok is often used in Chinese, Japanese and Korean cuisine, and is the star ingredient in fermented dishes like suan cai and kimchi. Gobble some up for your hit of vitamin C and fibre. Try it roasted with sesame dressing, shredded in a slaw, or in a warming soup. Wombok is a chunky boy, with an average weight of 1.7kg, but thankfully you can buy it in smaller amounts to suit what you need.



BETEL LEAF

You may have enjoyed a betel leaf in its best form: wrapped around a delectable filling. These leaves are common in Thai and Vietnamese cooking – look up miang kham, Thailand's flavour-packed 'one bite wrap', and bò lá lốt, Vietnamese grilled beef skewers. The peppery betel leaf is wrapped around nuts and spices to make paan, a mouth-freshening, post-meal treat from India, and has been historically chewed with tobacco around Asia as a stimulant (don't try this one at home, kids). A true chameleon, betel leaves are also used for non-culinary traditional purposes – in India and Sri Lanka, a sheaf of betel leaves can be offered as a mark of respect at weddings and New Year celebrations.

EN CHOY
Aka: Chinese spinach, amaranth, yin choy, xian cai

The scientific name for this little guy is *Amaranthus dubius*. And although it's native to South America, Mexico and the West Indies, it now grows widely around the world. As you may have guessed, en choy is similar in flavour to spinach, and shines in its simplicity when stir-fried with garlic and salt, or when steamed (take care not to overcook it). The distinctive dark green and red leaves come about because en choy is related to beetroot and contains antioxidants called betalains. Like its cousin, en choy will turn your broth bright red when cooked. It's a nutritional powerhouse, boasting iron, carbs, calcium, folate, vitamins A and C, and calcium.

CHINESE CHIVES
Aka: garlic chives

These bad boys are way more garlicky than common chives – vampires beware! Chinese chives – recognisable by their flat green leaves – are a tasty addition to stir fries, soups and pork dumplings. Add a sprinkle of them to a variety of dishes, from scrambled eggs to noodles, though you may want to cook them so the flavour isn't overwhelming. Waste not, want not – you can eat the leaves, stems, buds and blossoms of this plant. There are plenty of good things for your bod to come from eating them, too – garlic chives are rich in vitamins A and C, iron, thiamine and betacarotene, which boost immunity.

CHINESE BROCCOLI
Aka: gai lan

Chances are you've enjoyed a side of Chinese broccoli drowned in oyster sauce – a perfect pal for dumplings. You can recognise it by its thick stems and dark green leaves, and true to its name, it's got a similar flavour to broccoli (though is slightly more bitter). When cooked, its stems are tender and juicy, yet retain a satisfying crunch. Like many other leafy greens, there are benefits to eating Chinese broccoli: it's high in betacarotene, which helps prevent age-related vision loss, and is a good source of vitamin E. This one is common in Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese and Thai cuisine. Fun fact: broccolini is actually a hybrid of gai lan and broccoli. ✽

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i love my shop

EMMA HUBER IS THE BAKER AND OWNER OF MILLERS' LOCAL BAKEHOUSE IN WOLLONGONG.

Where is it? 2/363 Crown Street, Wollongong, New South Wales.

What happens here? On Friday and Saturday from 9–11am, we sell direct to customers at our Hole in the Wall space. On Thursdays we do a weekly pop-up at Moore Street General café in Austinmer. The rest of the week we bake for our wholesale customers.

What's the story behind the hole-in-the-wall space? We bake in a kitchen that used to be a café called Sandygoodwich, which I owned with my partner, Yon Miller. When we decided to close, I concentrated on my own business and baking. I sublet the front of the space to other café operators so I could maintain our old kitchen out the back for wholesale. During COVID, we built a following for our weekly retail pick-up menu – all we needed was a pick-up space. So we emptied out an old storage room that was already on our leasehold and it became the Hole in the Wall.

What's your food philosophy? To use produce that is grown as locally as possible. We use real ingredients (like free-range eggs, actual butter, milk and flour) – not pre-mixes, concentrates or powders. Our philosophy is all about baking and eating for deliciousness and a moment of pleasurable escape.

What's your baking origin story? My mother was a pastry cook and I used to love hearing about what she baked at work that day. Being in food was all I ever wanted to do, but I was expected to go to university, so I did a Bachelor of Industrial Design, then a Bachelor of Fine Arts and then a Certificate in Business. Over those years I supported myself by working casually in hospitality. I taught myself to bake at home. There was no YouTube until I was well into my 30s so I would watch cooking and baking shows on TV and video, and was never without a cookbook in my bag or by my bed.

What do you love about your job? I love that baking enables a sharing of culture in a way that is approachable, delicious and inclusive. If I feel a bit lost, I find grounding through a link to what I ate during my childhood or with my grandparents. I draw on my Central European Jewish heritage and its cultural traditions and find warmth through sharing part of that with people who may never have experienced any aspect of European Jewish food before.

Which pastry is closest to your heart? Baking with yeast is my favourite, whether it's croissant dough, babka, doughnuts or bread. We recently did a bear claw using croissant pastry; we filled it with cream cheese, hazelnuts and sour cherries. It was based on a strudel that my Austrian grandfather used to take me to eat at the Gelato Bar in Bondi that has since closed. It gave me great pleasure to make. It was the absolute icing on the cake (sorry!) and our customers loved it.

What's your most popular item? Our almond croissant. It was slow going for a long time but eventually they took off and now we sell hundreds each week.

What's next for you? We are planning to move the bakery. The building we're in has been sold and is earmarked for demolition.

Where can we find out more? Online at millerslocalbakehouse.com and on Instagram at @millerslocalbakehouse. ✽

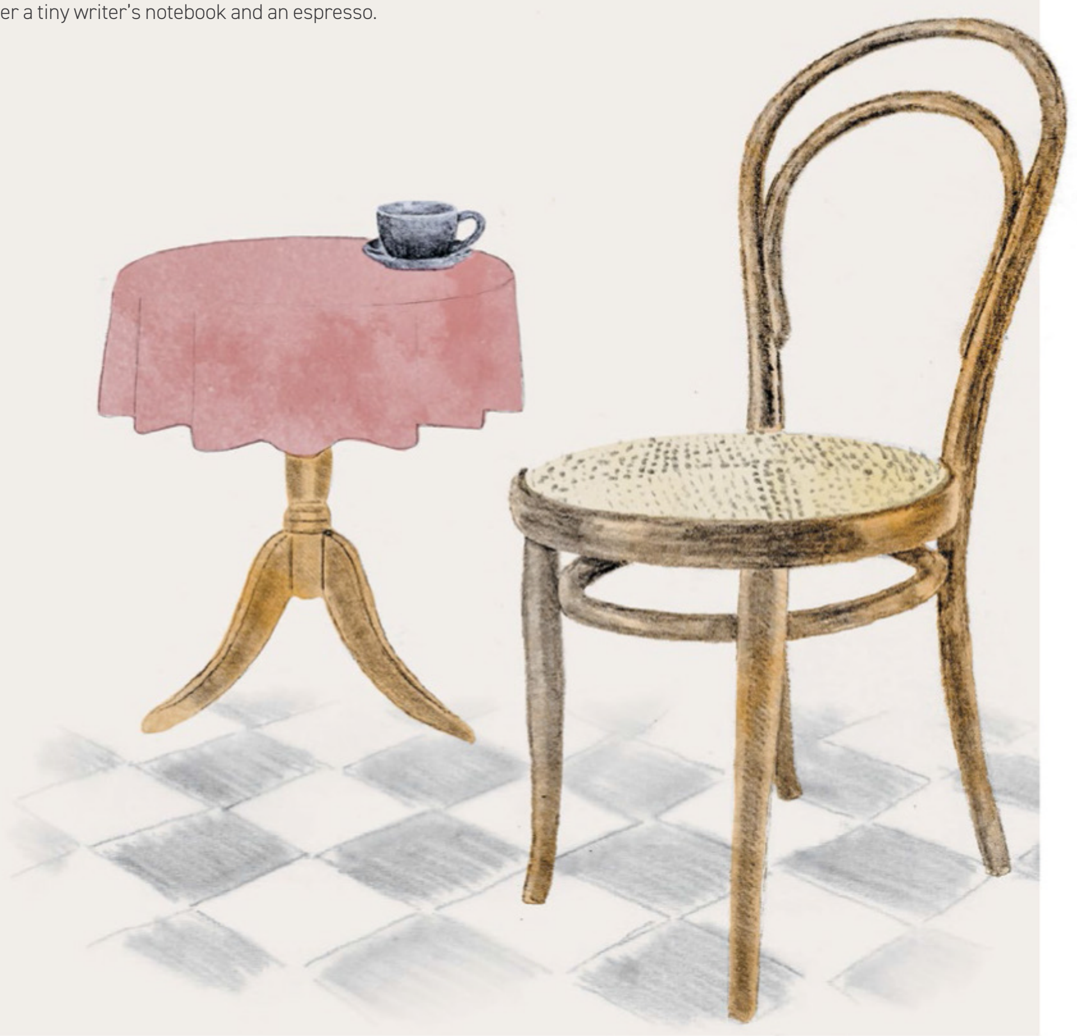
sitting pretty

take a seat, it's time for a history lesson on famous chairs.

WORDS **KATE STANTON** ILLUSTRATION **CASS URQUHART**

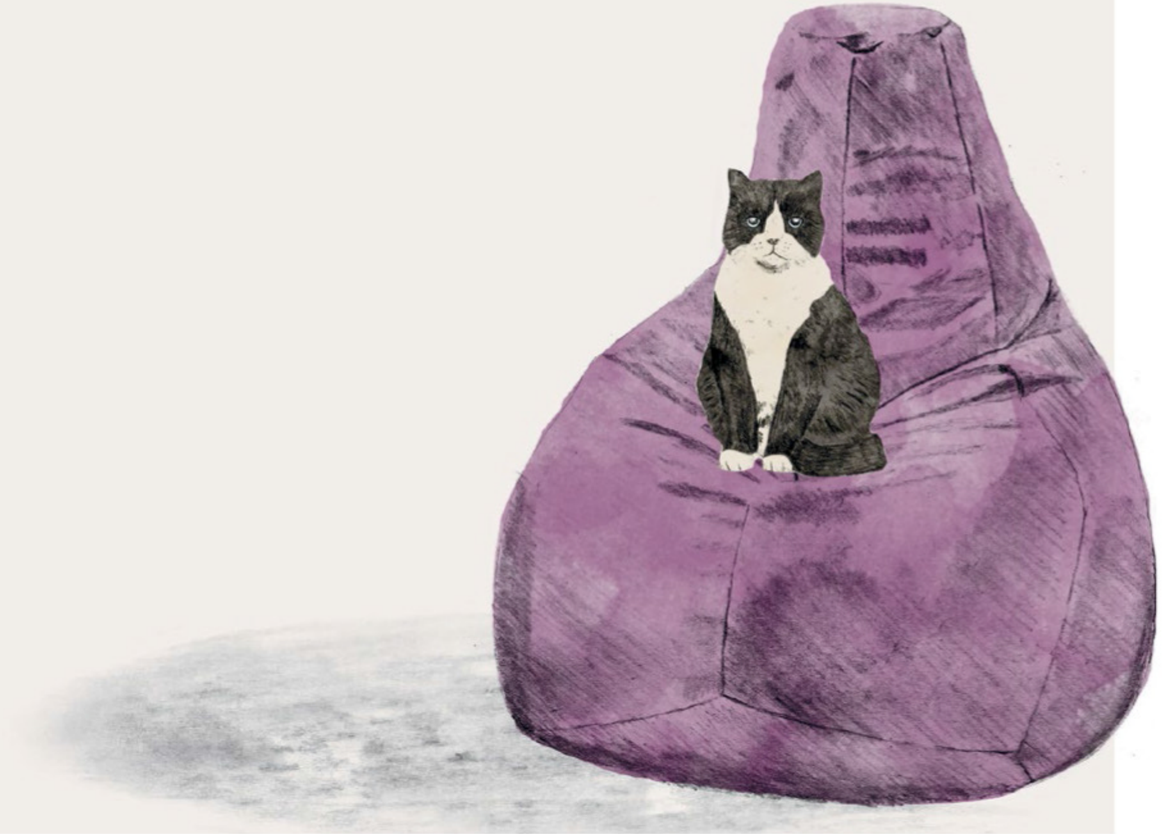
thonet no.14 chair (1860)

Some objects are so ubiquitous, it's odd to think they had to be invented. Though you've probably sipped thousands of flat whites from a simple, curved-back chair like this one, it didn't just emerge fully formed from the primordial ooze. It's the result of years of hard graft (including bankruptcy) by German-Austrian cabinetmaker Michael Thonet, who developed a game-changing technique for bending wood using hot steam (instead of carving it by hand). Thonet's breakthrough made it quick and easy to mass-produce and transport sturdy, affordable and lightweight furniture, like an early version of IKEA (minus the Swedish meatballs). In 1853, Thonet established the Gebrüder Thonet company in Vienna with his five sons, and set about making furniture in his signature 'bentwood' design style. In 1860, he introduced the No. 14 chair, a nifty design solution for the changing psychological needs of European café-goers; they found the long communal benches popular before the 19th century too overwhelming in crowded, newly industrialised cities. Eating with rowdy strangers was now a bit passé, and single-seat café chairs, like the No. 14, made it much easier to gossip with close pals, people-watch in chic solitude, or ponder life's trickiest existential questions over a tiny writer's notebook and an espresso.



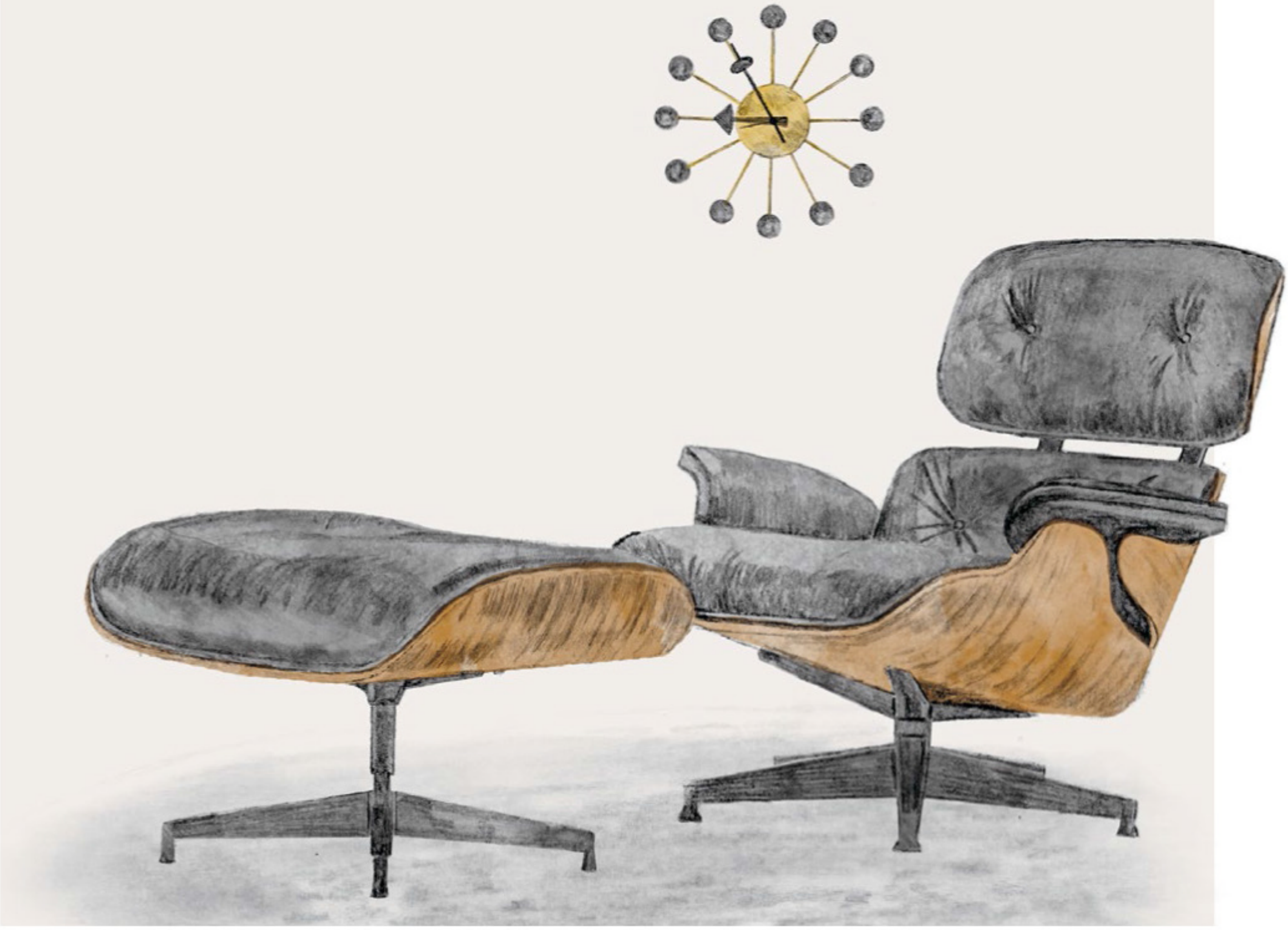
sacco bean bag (1969)

These days, bean bags are often associated with teenage bedrooms or 20-something sharehouses – the perfect seat for folks who want a comfy place to crash when they're playing video games or nursing a hangover. But the bean bag has a funky, design-forward history. It comes from the minds of three young Italian designers – Piero Gatti, Cesare Paolini and Franco Teodoro – who asked the kind of airy-fairy, philosophical question that usually stems from lolling about in a bean bag chair: why should our bodies be fitting into chairs when chairs should be fitting to our bodies? Italian furniture company Zanotta had come out with the inflatable chair in 1967, but it was a bit too rigid for what the trio had in mind. They approached Zanotta with their design for a bag-like chair stuffed with foam polystyrene pellets. Gatti later said they were inspired by "peasants" who stuffed leaves into old mattresses. In 1969, Zanotta introduced the Sacco, meaning 'bag' in Italian, to great success. It suited the era's countercultural spirit; having a bean bag chair in your home was a symbol of cool, youthful nonconformity – just like it is today.



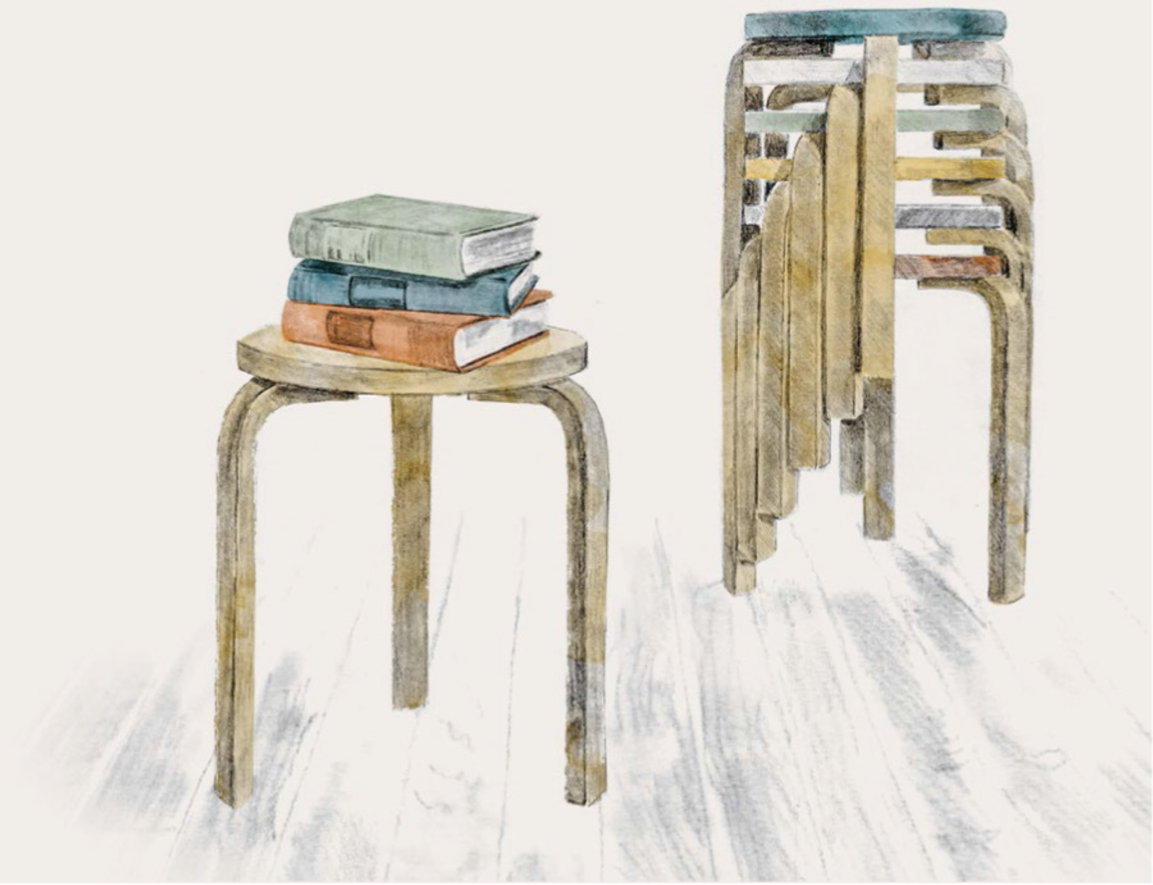
eames lounge chair and ottoman (1956)

One of the most fruitful partnerships in design history began with a terribly spelled, hand-written proposal on office stationery: "I am 34 (almost) years old, singel (again) and broke," Charles Eames wrote to his future wife and fellow designer, Ray, in 1941. "I cannot promise to support us very well but… will shure in hell try." (Today's Insta-perfect proposals could never.) He may have set the bar low, but Charles and Ray Eames would become very successful, indeed, as well as synonymous with Mid-century-Modern design. In 1956, their Eames Office design house debuted the Lounge Chair and Ottoman, a stylish and (importantly) cosy creation inspired by old British club chairs. It was also a nod to their friend, famed director Billy Wilder, who liked to nap in his director's chair between takes on film sets. The lounge chair became famous for its seductive, sophisticated approach to comfort (*Playboy* described it as having "voluptuous luxury that few mortals since Nero have known"). Ironically, Charles and Ray also happened to design one of the world's *least* sexy seats, in that it might remind you of long layovers and soul-crushing flight delays: the Tandem Sling seating system is their best-selling chair, and has been used at airport boarding gates all over the world since 1962.



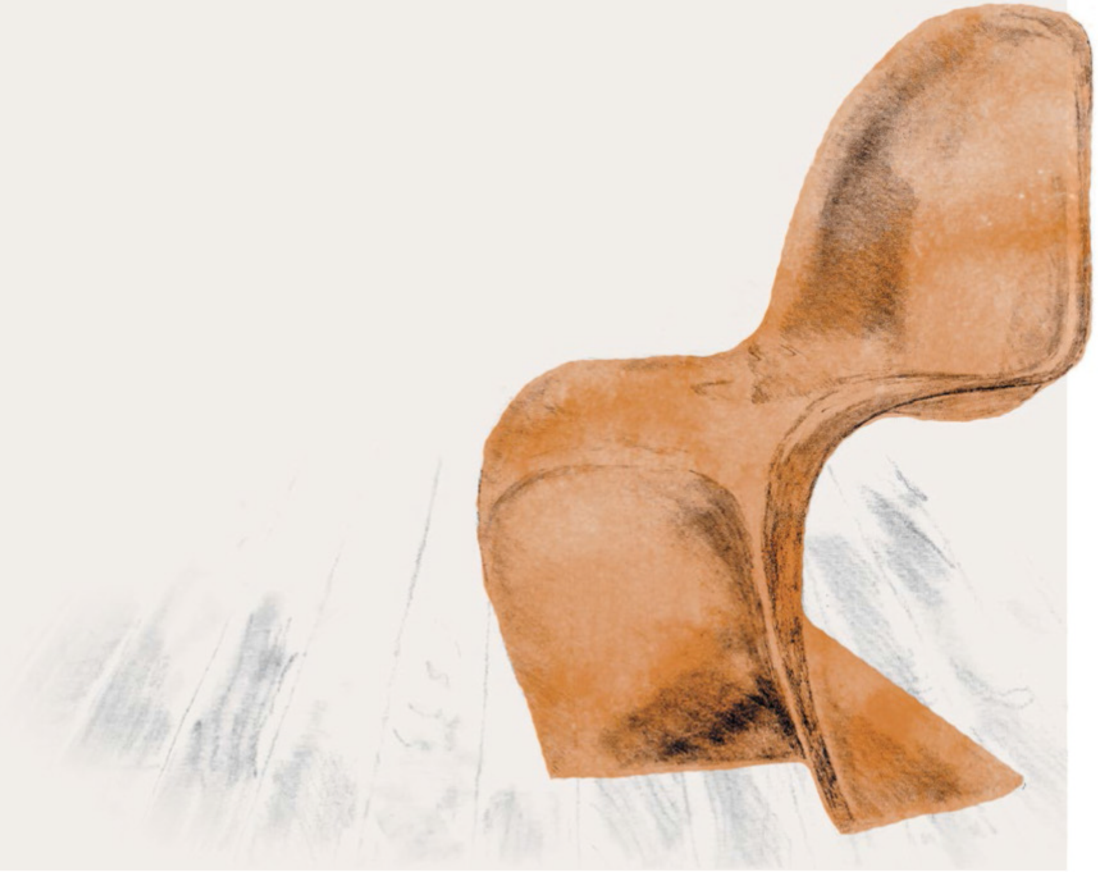
artek stool 60 (1933)

Are you thinking, "But it's just a stool?" They couldn't even be bothered to come up with a nice resting place for your back? That you could make one with a few pieces of stacked wood? Think again! The stool 60 looks a bit underwhelming because it's been replicated so many times, but it was a revolutionary piece of furniture design when it debuted in 1933. It marked the invention of the bent L-shaped chair leg, a sturdy but stylish way of attaching legs to chair seats (instead of tubular sticks stuck to the bottom). And the stool only had a few components, which made it relatively easy to produce on a large scale. It was also stackable, and could be used as a small table or bar seat. This was a pretty big deal for its Finnish inventor Alvar Aalto, who tested the stool prototype by repeatedly throwing it around the furniture factory to see if it would break. When it didn't, he exclaimed, "We'll make thousands of these one day!" Several million of the chairs have been made since. Though copycats abound, the original model is still sold today by Artek, the manufacturing company Aalto founded with his wife, Aino.



panton chair (1967)

The next time you're sitting precariously on a Monobloc (those cheap and cheerful plastic chairs always tipping over at outdoor events), console yourself with the knowledge that it has very avant-garde origins. The process used to create the Monobloc stems from Danish designer Verner Panton's dream of creating the first-ever chair made from a single piece of plastic. In post-war Europe, plastic had emerged as a sexy, space-age technology (not a scourge on the planet like it is now), and Panton wanted to mould it into a stackable chair without any legs. "I want to design furniture that grows up out of the floor," he once said. After years of sketches and rejected prototypes, he finally teamed up with Swiss furniture manufacturer Vitra. In 1967, they debuted the legless, cantilevered, S-shaped seat. Panton's chair became a design sensation, a sleek, curvaceous symbol of the swinging '60s. Though it later suffered from poor sales (the plastic material had a reputation for ageing poorly), the chair was reintroduced in 1990 with a more durable polyurethane. It's also been said that the Panton chair is reminiscent of a naked body, which is likely why it was chosen to pose with a nude Kate Moss on a 1995 cover of *Vogue*. ✽



it’s cool to be kind

THE TEAM AT LUMI ARE BUILDING A RESEARCH-DRIVEN WELLNESS GAME FOR PLANT LOVERS.

Words **Shannon Jenkins**

Some say that showing your houseplant kindness will help it grow, but what if the secret to a happy, healthy plant is showing kindness to yourself? That’s the premise of Kinder World – a free mobile app where you can grow pot plants by completing small self-care activities.

Developed by Melbourne-based studio Lumi Interactive, Kinder World blurs the line between mental-health app and game (and evokes the vibe of a Studio Ghibli flick while doing it). The idea for the app was born during the pandemic, when Lumi co-founders Lauren Clinnick and Christina Chen were looking for mental wellbeing tools. “Apps like Headspace and Calm weren’t working for us; we have millennial Swiss-cheese brains and can’t sit still long enough to meditate, so we wanted to offer people relaxing experiences that were interactive and snack-sized,” Lauren says. The Lumi team found themselves turning to houseplants as a screen-free way of relaxing in ‘nature’ without leaving the house, and Lauren began to notice that people everywhere were doing the same. “I spoke to the team, because whenever there is a new subculture, that’s a signal that there’s some kind of big, emotional, unmet need,” she says. To explore the potential value of a wellness game about pot plants, Lauren interviewed hundreds of people who view tending to plants as a form of self-care. “I thought: OK, this could be a really good conduit for an exploration of how people take care of themselves,” she explains.

The resulting gameplay in Kinder World is surprisingly slow; it’s designed for players to water their plant once in the morning and once in the evening. “There’s no giant laundry list of quests or things that try to make you have longer play sessions,” Lauren says. “We want the game to give you a kiss on the forehead and let you go back into your life.”

This stands in stark contrast to the highly stimulating, addictive games that saturate the App Store today, and has shown positive results for Kinder World. “We retain a lot of our players and Kinder World becomes a part of their life, because we’re not very intrusive and we don’t use punishment,” Lauren says. “For example, the plants don’t die if you don’t water them – they are merely thirsty.” ‘Punishment’ is a common tactic that games use to pressure players to return on a daily basis. But with Kinder World, there’s really no pressure to come back at all. “It’s something that is very counter-theoretical to a lot of what we see in the mobile game space, and we’ve definitely had people criticise us. But when

Photo Stephanie Rose Wood

“WE WANT THE GAME TO GIVE YOU A KISS ON THE FOREHEAD AND LET YOU GO BACK INTO YOUR LIFE.”

we look at the statistics, we can see that there are people who are looking for a calmer, gentler experience.”

In 2021, with a team of just three people and the bones of Kinder World, Lumi raised almost $90,000 through crowdfunding platform Kickstarter. That, along with backing from VicScreen, became a “lifeline” and allowed them to hire a handful of contractors. Then in March 2022, Lumi hit the jackpot by securing an investment of almost $10 million from San Francisco-based venture capital firm Andreessen Horowitz. Since then, the studio has hired 20 full-time employees in Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the US, including wellbeing researchers. “It’s really rare in the game space to have full-time wellbeing researchers,” Lauren says. “We didn’t want to stay in our game-designer brain cave – we wanted to make sure that we were working with research so that we could do things refreshingly differently, and in a way that is positive to mental wellbeing.”

Dr Hannah Gunderman is Lumi’s resident wellbeing researcher. They work with psychologists and the Lumi team to ensure cutting-edge research is integrated into Kinder World at every level. One aspect of the game directly influenced by Hannah’s work are the ‘kindness activities’, where players can do gratitude exercises and a mindful breathing activity (the latter is currently in development).

Much of Hannah’s work is driven by a concept they’ve dubbed ‘crowdhealing’ – the idea that players can collectively benefit themselves and each other by being active members of kind communities. “A huge number of our Kinder World players live with social anxiety (just like me), which can make it hard to experience the positive wellbeing benefits of meaningful social interaction,” Hannah says. “Crowdhealing games can offer a new outlet for receiving those beneficial impacts.” This community-based approach to wellness has received promising feedback from users. “We were surprised to learn that for the majority of players, their favourite moment or experience in the game is receiving a ‘kind wish’ from another player, which you get after watering your own plant,” Christina notes.

As a result, Kinder World has attracted a community of women, non-binary people, LGBTQIA+ and neurodiverse folks. Lauren attributes this to Kinder World’s accessible approach to wellbeing. “We offer extrinsic rewards: you raise houseplants; you get dog treats as a soft currency; you’re rewarded with decoration items; you receive positive messages from other players and you’re able to send them yourself,” she says. “There’s something about that which forms a stickier, more positive nurturing habit for a lot of people rather than the solitary experience of journalling apps or meditation and mindfulness apps. These apps work for many people, but there are also many others who are left behind.”

While Kinder World is still in its early days (it’s currently available to download in ‘early access’ form for iOS and Android), there are heaps of features to come, such as community gardens and a take-one-leave-one stall for digital items. Christina says Lumi Interactive is also working hard to fulfil its clear vision: “To make an impact that truly brings us towards a kinder future.” ✽

the birthday blues

CELEBRATING A TRIP AROUND THE SUN MAKES KATE STANTON SPIRAL.

I've always hated my birthday. I'm jealous, awed and baffled by people who look forward to theirs with excitement or even indifference. What is their secret?! They must be Leos (Leos *really* love birthdays, don't they?) or glass-half-full types, or people who don't spend every moment of their precious, fleeting lives wondering whether everything is falling apart. They must be so relaxed!

A birthday's primary function is to mark the passage of time, which prompts far too many existential questions for my liking. What have I done that merits celebration? Have I really wasted yet *another* year on this winding road towards certain death, scrolling through my phone and binge-watching mediocre melodramas about rich people? I could have been curing cancer or 'living life to the fullest' or writing the generation-defining romantic comedy I've dreamt about since I was a kid. Birthdays make me wonder: am I too old? Am I too late? What have I done with my inconsequential scrap of space and time on this beleaguered and overcrowded planet? Sorry… I'm spiralling; it's a birthday tradition.

In one week, I'll turn 36. 36?! How can that be? I feel faint. But I don't suddenly hate birthdays because I'm teetering on the cusp of middle age (though I do remember thinking I was 'old' and 'running out of time' when I was 30 and 25 and even 16). My mum has a picture of me at my fourth birthday party, hiding under the table below an abandoned cake, unblown candles burnt down nearly to the icing. People started to sing the world's worst song, "Happy Birthday", and I knew that shit wasn't for me. I think I resented the performance of it all, knowing I was expected to smile and be happy because it was 'my day'.

Growing up, I rarely had a party. What if no one showed up or had fun? I wouldn't be able to deal with the stress, at least not on my birthday. When I turned 16, my friends tried to throw me a surprise party, but couldn't find me because I'd decided to spend the day being emo and reading romance novels at the library. For me, birthdays have always been weird and deeply disappointing occasions. They're high-pressure days that usually let us down, and it's always a relief when they're over. They should be like any day, but instead we're wondering if people remembered us, if we felt special enough, if we expressed appropriate gratitude for presents. Birthdays are awkward because they aren't celebrated communally like Christmas or Halloween. Every year, people say happy birthday to me and I say, "You too." I never learn!

One thing that's nice about getting older, and marking so many birthdays that I haven't enjoyed, is that I'm more confident in knowing exactly how I want to spend my day. I've learnt that the best way to deal with uncomfortable feelings is not to avoid them, but to confront them head-on. This year, I've planned an elaborate birthday all to myself. I've taken the day off work, booked a very fancy facial and a brunch for one. This is the one day a year I can feel my big feelings. I can be dramatic and existential and wonder: what is the point of anything? Am I too old? Am I too late? But at least I'll be having my annual angst-fest while someone is lathering expensive serums all over my skin and feeding me poached eggs. It's my birthday, and I can be mad about it if I want to. ✽

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TAKE IT FROM REBECCA VARCOE – MEETING YOUR IDOLS IS RISKY BUSINESS.

I'll admit it. I'm a fiend for a celeb. I can't help it – I feel like I learn celebrity gossip against my will, my fingers navigating to tabloid content online with a mind of their own. My thoughts wander to places where I, too, am a person of influence. In this world, I have chance encounters with my idols and make such an impression that I immediately become part of their circle. Truthfully, I don't know why I entertain this fantasy – in the few close encounters with stars that I've managed to wrangle, I've behaved like an absolute grade-A loser.

It's 1999. I'm 10 years old, wearing iridescent capri pants as I queue to meet Vanessa Amorosi after a live in-store performance. I tell her she has a really good voice (groundbreaking) and ask her the name of the little dog she's holding. To this she says "thank you," the name of her dog and then "next". Little me was gutted. I'd imagined we'd be kindred spirits, instant friends. I thought she'd think, "Wow, this kid is really something" and take me under her wing.

By the time 2014 rolled around, I'd matured considerably. I was 24 and about to travel solo for the first time, off to America with some grant money burning a hole in my pocket and ready to interview some of my writing idols. I figured it was only a matter of days before I was hired by an LA writer to be their gifted and aloof ingénue. Twenty-four hours out from my trip, I contracted strep and had to get a penicillin shot in my butt cheek. The bruise it left wasn't the only parting gift – I also gained a case of oral thrush, a reaction to the antibiotics that left my tongue covered in sores. Upon arriving in LA, I headed off to my first interview, in which I covered my sore-riddled mouth with my hand for most of the lunch date, and somehow managed to relay the details of my recent break-up to this creator of a hit TV show. She didn't offer me a job.

I am not sure why I thought I'd be charming and put-together while travelling and meeting influential people. One time, I was boarding a plane that subjected us economy passengers to the humiliation of walking through first class to get to our seats. Someone down the aisle was holding up the line, so I stood there, jetlagged in activewear, staring blankly into the eyes of a man in first class. For the longest time I stared, as he glanced away and then back to see if I was still staring (I was). All of a sudden, I realised I was burning a hole in Chris Pine's sizeable forehead. The line moved on before I had a chance to charm him with an apology.

I haven't fared much better in the years since, either. After one of David Sedaris's live shows, I rushed to his book signing, ready for what I imagined would be a personalised note based off some fantastic little tête-à-tête we'd have, laughing our way through our 30 seconds together. Instead, in response to my story about a woman who had vaped on a plane in front of me (he'd told a similar story in his show), he offered only two words – "how funny" – and warmly moved me along. Then there was the time I was introduced to Jimmy Fallon in a New York nightclub. I had drunk approximately 50 vodka and orange juices, and I believe I simply shook his hand and said, "I love you."

They say you should never meet your idols, but maybe it's just my idols who should never meet me. ✽

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RAPPER AND SINGER SAMPA THE GREAT.

Interview **Emma Do**

Who were your earliest musical influences? The music that first hit me as a wave of inspiration was the music my parents played, which was Kalindula – Zambian folk music like from artist PK Chishala – and the music my cousin played, which was Tupac and hip-hop music.

What boundaries are you trying to push? The idea that there's just one sound that comes from the African continent. And it either sounds like this, or sounds like that, which is never the case. The continent has so many countries, so many different dialects, so many different languages, that it would be a shame to showcase one story from one country. 2022 was about us having pride in our culture, taking a Zambian band with us and showing people that there are opportunities outside of our country.

When did Zambian music begin to weave its way into your album? During the pandemic, I came back to Zambia as I couldn't get back into Australia. I've always been inspired to come back and reconnect with musicians from home, so it just felt like the perfect time to actually explore Zambian music. I always say the source of my last album, *The Return*, is Zambian music, but I really wanted to gain knowledge of why I'm inspired by it and why it leads the theme of my projects. So Zamrock was a huge influence for *As Above, So Below*. There are also influences from South African music, and "Bona" was a homage to Kwaito music that I listened to growing up in Botswana.

Where do you go to recharge? As soon as I came back from touring, I went to my parents' farm and was just like, "Nobody contact me. Just let me ground myself, breathe and have a normal sleeping schedule." Rest was a huge thing in 2022 – just being in nature and grounded and being able to exist outside of the touring schedule is really important, and something we implement in our schedules now. We have rest days and not five back-to-back shows, even though any rock star would be like, "That's nothing!"

Why is family so important to your creative process? I was just raised in a very communal house. If we weren't in Zambia at my grandma's house, we had EVERYONE at our house. That informs the story – the love of being with family. Not to say that everything is perfect, but those are the people I relate to the most. My sister Mwanje was actually the musical star of the family, whereas I was the one who'd go to my room and do my middle kid rants in my poetry book. Now Mwanje is the person who's on the stage with me at Glastonbury and Coachella, so it feels beautiful that these little dreams came to fruition.

I also had a beautiful revelation when I went back to Zambia: I found out my uncle played in the Zamrock band Witch. I had no idea! My dad told me nonchalantly, and I was like, "That's important information I needed for my career!" Because I felt like I was the only one doing this in the family. But it was relatable to see someone else inspired by the same urge to be an artist, so even if it didn't work out, and even if I failed, I would know that it's something that's innately in our blood; that what we love doing is making music. That was really encouraging.

How important is it to you to be a role model? I think my experiences in Australia with making sure the mainstream knows about Black artists really took a toll on me. I put myself in this imaginary ambassador role that wasn't necessarily asked of me, but when you don't see a lot of your culture in the forefront, it automatically becomes the thing.

I will always use my platform to push musicians from home forward, but I want to make sure people understand that this is a human being who makes mistakes, gets angry, sad, lonely and so on. Being able to represent that in my music is so important. The ethos of being a role model is more about being a real model, which is what Tupac often said. I'm just trying to show that a real person from this country is able to push music forward. ✽

hit the road

seeing the world by yourself is one heck of an experience. nine solo travellers share their wisdom, from meeting new pals to embarking on unexpected adventures.

"Travelling solo made me more open to connecting with fellow travellers and gave me more opportunities to experience adventures that weren't on my horizon. It is uncomfortable at first, but you will meet great, likeminded people along the way. My money-saving tips are to travel in the shoulder season and to try staying at hostels, which offer good value for money and cooking facilities. Make use of this since food is a big expense, but try to find a balance between trying new exciting foods of the country and cooking in a hostel. Also, look for last-minute experiences you'd like to do. Often people cancel last minute and you are able to find great deals online on things like skydiving or other popular travel activities that cost quite a bit."

Marco van der Zee, travelled solo across South-East Asia and Australia

"Travelling solo is exciting, eye-opening and the biggest confidence boost I have given myself. If you come from a protective family or haven't had many chances to make decisions alone, travelling by yourself can feel overwhelming. I was 37 and a mother of two when I decided to make my first trip. I started with a few short trips within the country, which helped me build my confidence. I love art and music so I plan my trips around some event, such as a biennale or concert. With a central goal in place, the rest of the things – where to stay, places to hang – become easy to plan. Getting time away by yourself from work and family is precious – a time for serendipities!"

Heena Pari, made solo trips to Kolkata, Delhi, Venice, Berlin, Krakow and the US

"I wish I'd known that hostels are not scary (well, mostly). When I started travelling solo, I shunned hostels for several years because I perceived them to be rowdy and just 'not my crowd'. That meant I'd save up for trips for longer, as accommodation was quite costly. Once I did experience the hostel environment, I actually met so many interesting people and really learnt to embrace it. Every hostel has a difference vibe, and you can usually tell by the descriptions and reviews what crowd it will attract."

Aimee Han, travelled solo across Europe

"The best thing about travelling alone is that other people are more inviting towards you and more willing to talk to you – whether they're fellow travellers or locals – because you're not with someone else, and they don't feel like they're interrupting you. You end up meeting more people and having better interactions because you're on your own. The other great thing is that no one knows you – that actually gave me confidence. If you are starting to feel awkward, you can just ghost the party or social scenario since no one has any expectations of you."

Anthony Richardson, travelled solo across Europe and the US

"I love being able to do whatever I want, whenever I want. I can explore and eat on my own schedule and sneak on to tours and transport easily as there's normally always space for one more person. Travelling solo also teaches you a lot about yourself – it can be testing, which makes it a great opportunity for self-reflection and growth. It's worth nothing that you'll be facing a unique set of challenges depending on your ethnicity and your destination. Speaking generally as an Asian woman who can often be seen as an easy target, I'm all for safety first. I like to purchase a SIM card online before my trip, so I'm always in contact with somebody. I also send an itinerary of my activities and accommodation to family back home. And I always keep some cash in the right currency for emergencies and ahem, bribes, in sticky situations."

Michelle Law, author of *Asian Girls are Going Places*

"One thing I wish I'd known before jetting off is that if you're going on a big leg of travel, keep any important info close. Nobody is there to cover you when you get somewhere after 30 hours of travelling and barely any sleep, and that bit of paper with where you need to go is at the bottom of your bag. My other tip is books! If you are lonely or homesick, it's nice to have something constant as you're hopping between cities. There is something comforting knowing you can take an adventure with you while you're travelling. But sometimes actually embracing solitude is the best thing. Taking a conscious day to yourself and enjoying the little things can be a nice reset."

Rose Elizabeth, travelled solo across Mexico

"If you're lonely while travelling, just say hello to people. It might get you a short chat, or a lifelong friend. Either way, a good conversation will heal most things that wear you down on the road. When it comes to safety, trust your instincts. The reality is, the safety concerns for women travelling alone aren't that much different to the ones we have at home. You already know how to keep yourself safe – you're already doing it. One afternoon I was exploring some museums with two lovely women I had met, and we were sharing a taxi back to our hostels. I immediately reacted to the vibe of the driver, when one of the women leaned over and whispered in my ear, "You're getting out at our stop." This happened to be in Peru, but it could have happened anywhere; it could have happened in my hometown. Trust your instincts, no matter how slight, and keep looking out for each other."

Adele Swann, travelled solo across South-East Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas

"Travelling solo taught me that the best adventures are not planned or something we expect – getting to a place and finding the best experience based on the people you meet creates some of the most amazing days and journeys. It is easy to be nervous about missing out if you do not plan ahead, but there is always a way to make what you want happen – it just might not be in the way you anticipated."

Irina Halmagiu, travelled solo across South America

"What I love most about travelling solo is being able to pretend I'm a local in a way that could never happen if I was with someone else. It isn't always easy – there can be the odd lonely moment, or even times when you wonder what the hell you're doing – but there's something super-satisfying about being really happy in your own company and being on your own adventure. If I'm travelling in a non-English speaking country, I always try to learn a few words in the local language – that always helps. Wherever I am, I usually go to the same café every morning for breakfast – it only takes a day or two for people to start chatting to you." ✽

Leta Keens, travelled solo across Australia, Europe, Asia and the US

around the world in curious facts

WANT TO APPEAR WELL TRAVELLED? IMPRESS YOUR MATES WITH THESE HUMDINGERS.

Words **Shannon Jenkins**

Illustration **Alice Buda**

THE TWIN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD The Nigerian city of Igbo-Ora is home to so many twins, it organises an annual festival in celebration of doubles. Up-to-date stats are tricky to pin down, but a 2002 report from the BBC cited Igbo-Ora's 'twinning rate' as high as 158 per 1,000 births (other countries are closer to 12 per 1,000). Locals believe the phenomenon has to do with their love of eating okra leaves and amala (a dish made from yams and cassava flour), which they claim impacts ovulation. Boffins aren't totally sold on the theory, though – some suggest that it's simply a matter of genetics.

THE HOME OF THE 'DOOMSDAY VAULT' The Svalbard Global Seed Vault (colloquially known as the 'doomsday vault') is a highly secure facility that resides on the snowy island of Spitsbergen, Norway. This very special vault holds the future of the human race in its steely hands, since it stores 1,194,244 seed samples from across the globe. Its purpose is to preserve the world's rapidly declining biodiversity and in turn, its food supply (we're unsure whether this is reassuring or terrifying).

THE LAND OF THE SORCERERS Catemaco, or *tierra de brujos* (land of the sorcerers), is Mexico's witchcraft hub. Countless magical folk here practise rituals and uphold belief systems that combine Indigenous traditions with Catholicism, and locals turn to shamans to help where doctors can't. Visitors can purchase magical objects and services of both the black and white varieties all year round, but it's the town's annual festival of witchcraft (held from the first Friday of March) which attracts flocks of curious tourists.

AUSTRALIA'S UFO CAPITAL Wycliffe Well is the dusty Northern Territory town that's held the title of Australia's UFO capital since World War II, when service troops (who used the site as a market garden centre) would reportedly spot lights in the sky. Visitors today can expect the same. And if they don't have any extraterrestrial experiences, they can always hang out at the local alien-themed roadhouse and caravan park, instead.

A METALHEAD'S OASIS According to some nerdy research by devoted metalheads in 2012, Finland has the most metal bands per capita, boasting 50 bands for every 100,000 people. That Finland is a headbanging, guitar-shredding nation won't come as a surprise to any loyal Eurovision watcher, though. This is the country that birthed Lordi's "Hard Rock Hallelujah", after all.

THE FORGOTTEN PYRAMIDS We don't mean to burst Egypt's bubble, but it turns out that it is not, in fact, the country with the most pyramids. That title actually belongs to Sudan, which has at least 200 of the triangular structures, as opposed to Egypt's measly 138. Dotted along the Nile River, Sudan's pyramids are smaller and narrower than Egypt's, and were built more than 2000 years ago as tombs for Nubian kings. The first Nubian pyramid, however, was constructed hundreds of years after the last Egyptian pyramid was built.

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST FLOWER In the depths of Sumatra and Borneo's rainforests lies the biggest flower on earth: *Rafflesia arnoldii*. The largest *Rafflesia arnoldii* to ever be recorded was found in West Sumatra, Indonesia, measuring a monstrous 111 centimetres in diameter and weighing an estimated 11 kilos. Fleshy, orange and covered in wart-like bumps, these flowers aren't just famous for their size; their scent is pretty memorable, too. The odour is reminiscent of rotting flesh, earning the rare parasitic plant the nickname 'corpse flower'. But it's all for good reason: the stench plays a crucial role in attracting pollinating insects.

We're welcoming back SPACES Volume Six!

This frankie favourite stays close to home, celebrating the places where creative Australians live, work and play. We also popped in on some clever folks who have made the most of the tiniest of places, and some who spend their time with flowers, bees and other living things.

*

by frankie magazine
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WHERE CREATIVE PEOPLE LIVE, WORK AND PLAY

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the happiest tote

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO CROCHETING YOUR OWN SMILEY BAG.

Words and project **Molla Mills**
Photos **Emma Sarpaniemi, Jonna Hietala and Sini Kramer**

this is an
intermediate
pattern

While this bag takes some time, all the hours spent crocheting will definitely be worth it when you throw it over your shoulder – you'll brighten the day of every passerby. Fun fact: the iconic yellow smiley face that we all know so well was originally designed as a logo for an insurance company in the 1960s.

SIZE

width 30cm, height 30cm, depth 10cm
size of one square is 10cm x 10cm

YARN

1x Liina cotton twine, 12-ply, by Suomen Lanka (100% cotton, 500g roll = 1280m) in natural white

1x Molla cotton yarn, 12-ply, by Suomen Lanka (100% cotton, 500g roll = 1280m) in yellow

HOOK

1.75 mm

OTHER

black embroidery yarn, cotton fabric for lining 80 x 40cm

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Work 24 squares for the bag, then join them together with slip stitches. Embroider a smiling face in the middle of the squares. Work a reinforcing border on the top of the bag, then a separate base and, lastly, work two handles in single crochet stitches.

ABBREVIATIONS

rnd = round, rounds

ch = chain stitch

s = stitch

sts = stitches

sc = single crochet stitch

dc = double crochet stitch

sdc = starting double crochet stitch

half-dc = half double crochet stitch

long-dc = long double crochet stitch

super-dc = super long double crochet stitch

yoh = yarn over hook

sl st = slip stitch

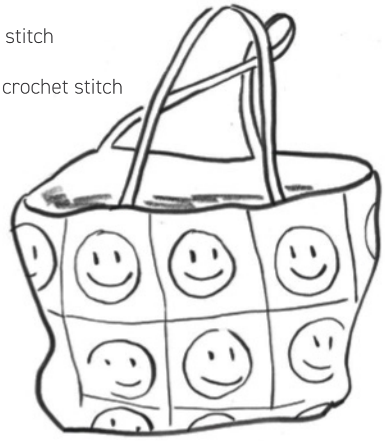
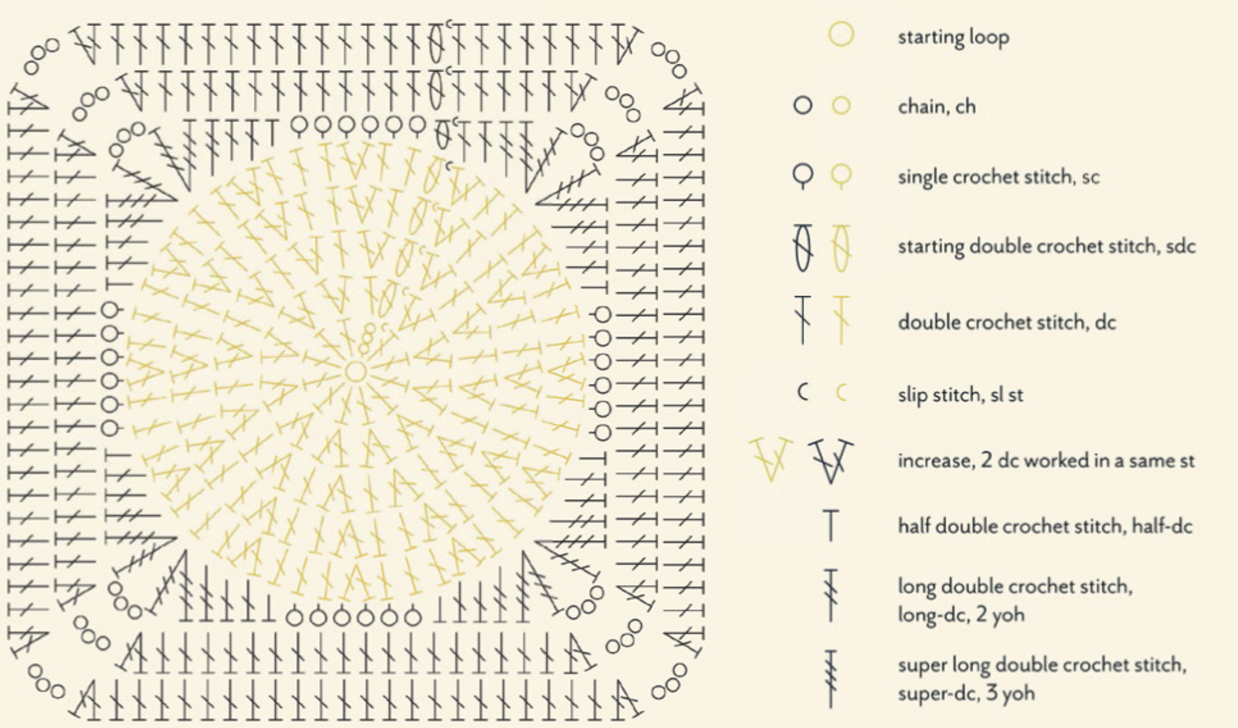


CHART AND EMBROIDERY PATTERN


starting loop
chain, ch
single crochet stitch, sc
starting double crochet stitch, sdc
double crochet stitch, dc
slip stitch, sl st
increase, 2 dc worked in a same st
half double crochet stitch, half-dc
long double crochet stitch, long-dc, 2 yoh
super long double crochet stitch, super-dc, 3 yoh

INSTRUCTIONS

SQUARE

RND 1. Roll a yarn loop around a finger with yellow yarn, close it with a sc, work 2 ch. Work 11 dc in the loop, carry the yarn tail inside the sts. Close round with a sl st. You now have 12 dc including the ch sts. To close the hole, pull the yarn tail tight.

RND 2. Work a sdc and 1 dc in the next st. Work 2 dc in each st, close all rounds with a sl st (24 dc).

RND 3. Work a sdc, work *2 dc in the next sts, 1 dc*, repeat *–* until the end of the round (36 dc).

RND 4. Work a sdc, work 1 dc, 2 dc in the next sts. *Work 1 dc, 1 dc, 2 dc in the next sts*, repeat *–* until the end of the round (48 dc).

RND 5. Work a sdc, work 1 dc in the next 2 sts. Work *2 dc in the next sts, 1 dc, 1 dc, 1 dc*, repeat *–* until the end of the round (60 dc). Cut yellow yarn and weave in ends. Change to natural white yarn.

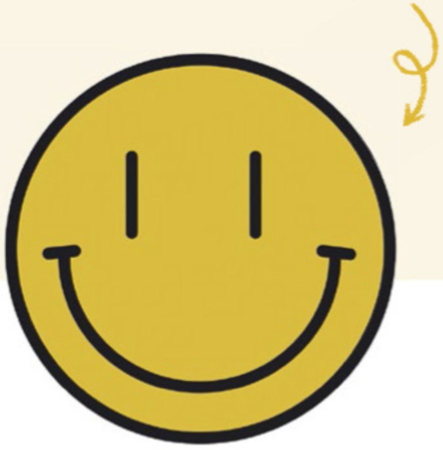
RND 6. Work a sdc, work *1 sc in the next 6 sts, 1 half-dc, 1 dc, 1 dc, 1 long-dc, 2 super-dc + 3 ch + 2 super-dc in the next sts, 1 long-dc, 1 dc, 1 dc, 1 half-dc*, repeat *–* in all four sides of the square. Close round with a sl st.

RND 7. Work a sdc, work 1 dc in the next 12 sts, work *2 dc + 3 ch + 2 dc in ch from the previous rnd, 1 dc in the next 18 sts*, repeat *–* in all four sides of the square.

RND 8. Work a sdc, work 1 dc in the next 14 sts, work *2 dc + 3 ch + 2 dc in ch from the previous rnd, work 1 dc in the next 22 sts*, repeat *–* in all four sides of the square.

Cut yarn and weave in ends.

Work altogether 24 squares with the same pattern. Embroider a smiling face in the middle of each square in black yarn. Block the squares in shape.



BASE

Work a bottom piece back and forth in single crochet stitches in natural white yarn. Work 85 chain stitches in natural white yarn to begin.

ROW 1. Work 1 sc in the second st from the hook, work 1 sc in each st (84 sc).

ROW 2. Work 1 ch, work 1 sc in each st (84 sc).

ROWS 3–28. Work as for round 2. Cut yarn and weave in ends.

SEWING

Join the squares together with a slip stitch seam in natural white yarn. Place the first two squares side by side, work the sl sts in the back loop of each st. Put the hook through the middle st in the corner, take a yoh, pull through both layers. Then put the hook through the next sts, remember, back loop only, and continue working 29 more sl sts. When you reach the corner st, grab the next two squares in the work and continue the seam without cutting the yarn. Work the third pair of squares in the same seam, cut yarn.

Continue joining the squares together with the same pattern. The height of the bag is 3 squares and the width is 8 squares. Work all squares together in vertical seams, then work two long horizontal seams to join all squares in one fabric.

Join the base in the work with a sl st seam, or sew it in place by hand. Cut yarn and weave in ends.

BORDER

Work a reinforcing border at the top edge of the work in single crochet stitches in natural white yarn. Start from the top right corner.

RND 1. Work 1 sc. Work 1 sc in each st of the squares, skip the seams (8 squares x 28 sc = 224 sc).

RNDS 2–6. Work 1 sc in each st. Leave a 1.5m long yarn tail for sewing, cut yarn. Fold the border in two and sew the seam by hand.

HANDLES

Work two long handles back and forth in single crochet stitches. Work 151 ch in natural white yarn to begin.

ROW 1. Work 1 sc in the second st from the hook, work 1 sc in each st (150 sc).

ROW 2. Work 1 ch, work 1 sc in each st (150 sc).

ROWS 3–6. Work as for row 2. Continue without cutting the yarn. Join the long sides of both handles together with a slip stitch seam, this will give more years of use for the handles. Attach the handles on the top edge of the bag inside the work by hand.

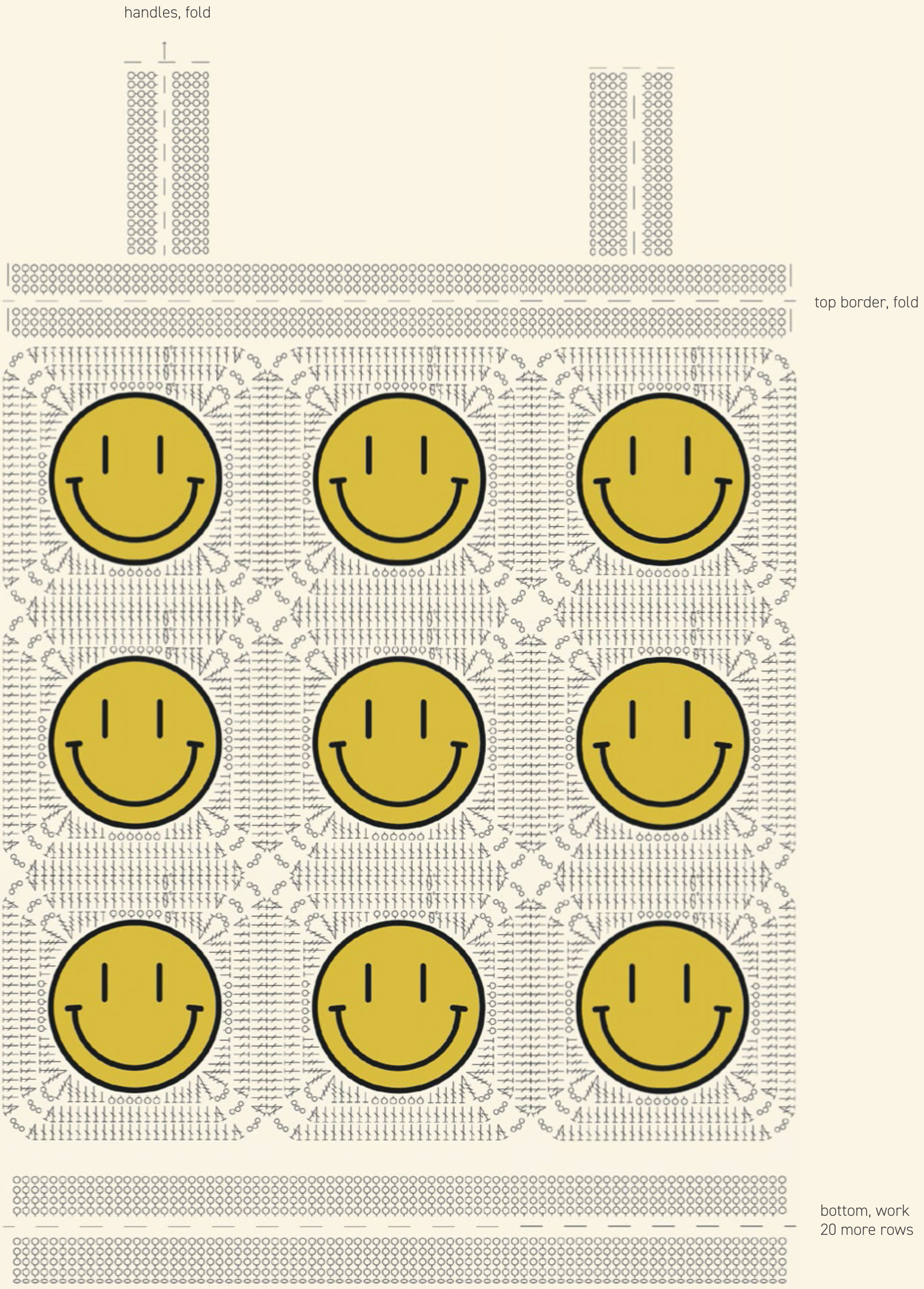
LINING

Cut a lining according to the size of your work. Sew the lining inside the work by hand. ✽

Crochet
Crush

This is an edited extract from Crochet Crush *by Molla Mills, published by Hardie Grant Books. Available in stores nationally, RRP $32.99. Scan the QR code to see more frankie faves.*

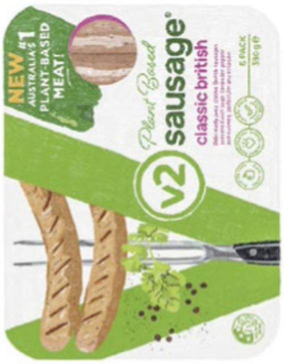
CHART, TOP BORDER, BOTTOM AND HANDLES


handles, fold
top border, fold
bottom, work
20 more rows

no animals harmed

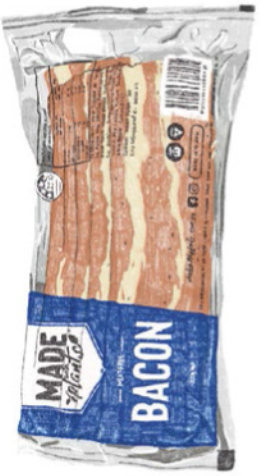
DEIRDRE FIDGE AND FRASER HARVEY FEASTED ON MOCK MEATS FOR A WEEK.

Illustrations **Caitlyn Bendall**



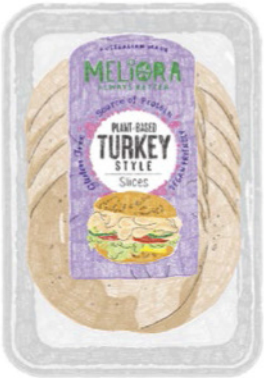
V2 PLANT-BASED SAUSAGE – CLASSIC BRITISH

I began my meat-free mission with 'Traditional English Sausages', which I naturally used to make Chicago-style hotdogs, as I'd never pass up an opportunity to disrespect the English. After a quick pan-fry, I remembered that the best way to cook a vegan sausage is to bake it, because no matter what, chunks will always stick to the pan (I may or may not also be an idiot, so the results are inconclusive). The sausage itself was tasty, and was naturally enhanced by the pickle relish, mustard and celery salt that are key to a Chicagog (fun new nickname I just invented). The great thing about bangers is that you never really know what's in them, and the same goes for this vegan version. But sausages bring out the best in us – no one's angry with a snag in hand – so who am I to give anything but praise? *FH*



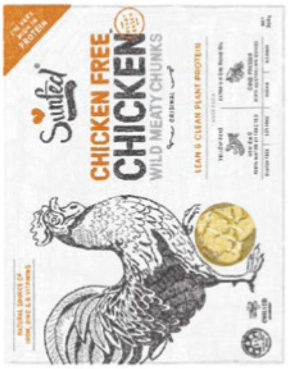
MADE WITH PLANTS MEAT-FREE BACON

I was a vegetarian for many years, and eventually moved into vegan territory, which is when I started eating fake meat products. Ironically, this tipped me over the edge and pushed me back into eating meat. I am all for reducing our environmental impact and supporting animal welfare, but processed food designed to replace meat really grinds my gears. This bacon will never taste like actual bacon, and the long list of additives and ingredients composed of numbers isn't ideal. Don't get me wrong – I am not one of those obnoxious 'bacon is life' people who briefly took over the internet in 2012. I am just a humble lady with sensitive skin and guts who would rather eat a lentil than fake bacon. That said, these meat-free strips do taste good, so if you need some bacon with your brekkie, these will certainly hit a spot. Just not *the* spot. *DF*



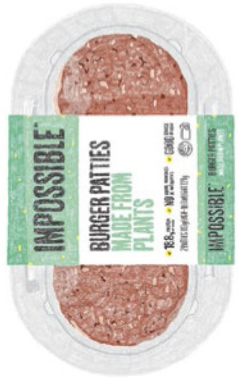
MELIORA PLANT-BASED TURKEY-STYLE SLICES

Ten years ago, I became really into fitness and carried hard-boiled eggs in my bag while talking about the benefits of waking at 5am. One of my staple snacks was turkey slices, which I'd eat from the packet in front of the fridge like a deranged malnourished person who'd been lost in the desert and managed to crawl home. It's fair to say there are many issues with that behaviour, but the turkey itself was never a problem. These 'turkey-style' slices, however, are another matter. I wish I could describe them as edible, but truthfully, they are drier than the aforementioned fantasy desert and have an aftertaste of 'essence of cardboard'. In their defence, they were most likely designed to go in a sandwich, and not grabbed by the fist of a hungry, lazy woman. Perhaps I'll try them with leftovers, or perhaps I'll donate them to a pigeon. *DF*



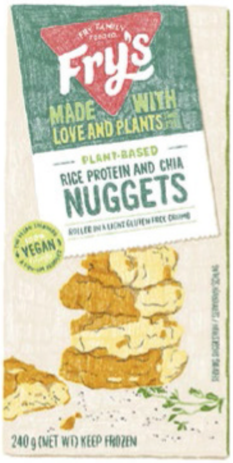
SUNFED CHICKEN-FREE CHICKEN CHUNKS

Chicken tenders are perfect for when you're not hungry enough to eat a whole breast or when a wing just won't satisfy. These, however, are 'chicken chunks', which is a pretty good way to market a thing that has no real shape or resemblance to actual chicken. These strike me as a good late-night drunk food. Bake them on high and dip them in whatever you have in your pantry or fridge – it doesn't matter! I went for slaw and a whole cupboard full of hot sauces (google Ultra Culture) and that was a good combo! Throw in a liberally buttered piece of white bread and you've got yourself a Taste Sensation. The good thing about the whole fake-meat movement is that it's really hard to overcook these things, which, after all, is perfect for when you arrive home in the wee hours and are starving for a quick fix. *FH*



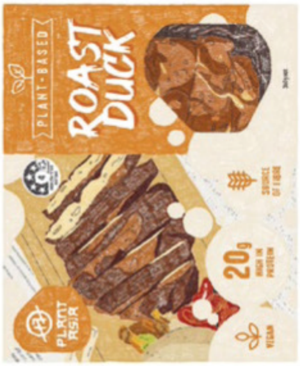
IMPOSSIBLE BURGER PATTIES

Most countries have a meal that is made with a protein wedged inside bread. Baguette, gyro, bánh mì – these are just some words I know, and are also examples of the many food items I've shoved down my gullet like a starved pelican. To me, the burger is the king of this category: a mighty titan that stands head and shoulders above the rest, were it to become a sentient being and grow horrifying mincey limbs. Thankfully these soy patties did not come to life – hearing them scream and beg for mercy while I cooked and ate them would have detracted somewhat from the experience (maybe I should go back to being a vegetarian). It's a bold move to call your meat-free brand Impossible, but these are the closest to a beef burger I've come across. Chow down guilt-free knowing you're not eating anything that once had a face. *DF*



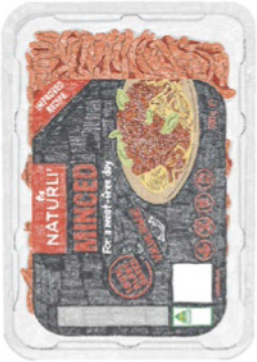
FRY'S RICE PROTEIN AND CHIA NUGGETS

Like many people aged between two and 82, my ears prick up with delight upon hearing the word 'nugget'. Like fairy bread or cordial, nuggets are mistakenly pigeonholed as children's food a lot of the time. This is a profound injustice because who among us doesn't enjoy a crispy, savoury treat, perfectly sized to eat on the go? These crumbed treaties tick all the boxes a nugget should tick: crunchy, bite-sized, moreish. The filling of a nugget is inconsequential – it's the texture and sauce-dipping we're after – so meat-lovers will still enjoy these plant-based delights. Truthfully, my zest for nuggets is so strong, these could have been filled with sawdust and rodent offcuts and I'd still have chowed down with the same level of frankly disgusting gusto. My body thanks the manufacturers for choosing rice protein and chia instead. *DF*



PLANT ASIA PLANT-BASED ROAST DUCK

Duck is one of those grey areas; half mammal, half fish, half goose. It crosses a plethora of genres in meat, and thus, lends itself pretty well to being made from things that don't have a face (Plant Asia's duck is made from wheat protein). Although the box suggested a recipe of duck a l'orange, we all know the best duck is BBQ duck. But I don't own a BBQ, so pan-fried it was! I will commend this one on its duck-like appearance. In the packet, in a room with low light, this could easily be mistaken for a real piece of duck – until you cut into it, which, I mean, fair enough. I strongly recommend making little Peking duck pancakes with the cucumber, spring onions, hoisin and coriander. It's the best, and this faux duck goes so well with delicious, tangy accompaniments. *FH*



NATURLI MINCED

I love the ambiguity of mince; it has no agenda, no end goal. It's just there to put in things; an old reliable friend. Obviously, to test a mince you HAVE to make lasagne, but that seemed like too much effort, so I opted for spaghetti bolognese. (Choice of pasta is also paramount when it comes to an authentic bolognese and I, never one to stray from tradition, opted for fettuccine.) I have to say straight-up: this was as good as a real meat sauce, which is surprising, but I guess really shouldn't be. People have been working on meat alternatives for a long time, and honestly, this vegan mince option is probably the best you could start with, should you cook it in a thick and rich tomato, garlic, onion and basil sauce. Also, be liberal with the cheese – vegan or otherwise. I'm calling this a Triumph of Cuisine. *FH* ✽

on the job

LINDSY GREIG IS A BREWER AND CERTIFIED CICERONE – THE BEER WORLD'S VERSION OF A SOMMELIER.

As told to **Leta Keens**

I'm a brewer and cellar lead at Stomping Ground brewery in Melbourne; I've been working here for four years. Before that, I managed a craft beer bar in New Zealand. I make the beer at Stomping Ground, and a day-to-day part of my job involves tasting it, smelling it, seeing what's going on – understanding all of that. I'm constantly looking at data to see what needs to happen to the beer – when the yeast needs to be pulled off or, sometimes, when to add fruit to it – those kinds of things.

Working in the brewery is very physical – at Stomping Ground we make four batches of beer a day. A batch of beer roughly has 400kg of grain in it – so you're having to lift 25-kilo bags up to shoulder height to get it into the mill. I actually love the physical work. I'm also interested in what we can do to have a lesser impact on our environment – breweries are very energy-intensive operations, and we use a LOT of water – so there's definitely a place for innovation. Carbon neutrality is definitely on the forefront of a lot of breweries' minds.

I grew up in southern Missouri, where craft beers have been a big thing for a long time, so it was kind of always around in my life. I studied musical theatre at college and was pursuing an acting career, but throughout my 20s worked in bars to supplement my income. I was in New Orleans for the film industry and was managing a craft beer bar in the French Quarter – I would have been about 26, and acting was giving me a lot of anxiety. I was pretty much having a breakdown during an audition, and one of my friends was like, "You don't have to do this anymore." Nobody had ever said that to me before.

I was living about two blocks from a small brewery, when the assistant brewer got injured. I knew the owner, and he was like,

Photo Stephanie Rose Wood

"You could come brew – you can figure it out, you're perfectly capable." I was quite confident in my beer knowledge then, although looking back, I shouldn't have been – I'd read one book on beer. I think the whole fake-it-until-you-make-it thing applied to me. I hadn't really had a science class since I was in high school, and here I was trying to make a career out of a very science-y thing.

I've been learning as much as I can; there's a thing called cicerone certification, which is similar to sommelier training for wine. I did some training through that: understanding style profiles; beer and food pairings; how to clean and install draft lines; some of the science of brewing, which is very much like bread making; what it means when the pH level drops. I had to do tasting exams, and then there were essays to write – it's all pretty intensive. I also studied through another institute where I did a brewing technology course. Some people are knowledge kings – I'm probably somewhere in the middle.

At Stomping Ground, I work about three days on the floor in the brewery and two days in the office doing boring stuff like orders and invoicing. I also do some work for a large hop supplier – they'll send me beers featuring their hops and I pair them with snacks you can buy at any supermarket. That's really fun.

There's a gender-based stigma about beer in Australia, mainly because the marketing used to be so bloke-driven up until the early 2000s. We need to shake that off. It's not that common for women to be on the production side of beer or in leadership roles. As a female brewer, I've had every reaction: "Do you like beer?" "Do you even drink beer?" Those are the big ones. Or people ask me what it's like to work with all blokes. You would never ask a male brewer that. People see me driving a forklift and question whether I'm capable of it. Those micro things every day are frustrating, which is why I'm involved in the Pink Boots Society, a not-for-profit for women in fermentation, advocating for education and breaking down barriers. I also have a podcast, *Crack the Ceiling*, with another girl, Tif Waldron, where we talk about things like that.

Having said that, I love the beer industry – it's incredibly welcoming and full of passionate people doing really amazing things. Any time you judge a beer competition or go to beer awards or a festival, you get to see people from all over the country, and they're all super-friendly and kind and caring.

The most misunderstood thing about beer is that it's just beer – something light and fizzy. I still meet too many people who say they don't like beer, so I just say, "Let's go find you something you like because, guaranteed, if you're a human with taste buds and you like wine, you're going to like beer." All the flavours you get in wine you get in beer, plus some – chocolate, coffee, roast, smoke, tropical fruits, coconut, vanilla, tangerine, grass, horse blanket, barnyard, wet hay, literally anything.

Although I taste beer every day, I probably only drink it about once a week. I love food, I love beverages, I love experiencing flavours – it's a very important human experience. Every time I drink beer, though, I'm always analysing it, which can be exhausting. With friends, sometimes I'd rather go to a wine bar, because I just want to enjoy what I'm drinking and not have to think about it. ✽

the great debate

IS CAMPING REALLY THAT FUN? TWO WRITERS ARGUE OVER THE MERITS OF SLEEPING UNDER THE STARS.

PITCH THAT TENT! BY DEIRDRE FIDGE

Camping is divisive. We've all met people who LOVE it: outdoorsy types who own expensive gear and practical gadgets, who frequently go away on weekends and return annoyingly perky. In the other, uh, camp, you have anti-campers: pale from lack of vitamin D, they scrunch their noses at the prospect of eating below-average food and living in your own filth.

But crucially, there is a significant population who sit in the middle: the Occasional Happy Campers, of which I am one. The premise of my debate, Madam Speaker, is that many people feel alienated by the outdoorsy zealots and have shunned camping without giving it a fair go. With respect to zealots, I am very pro-camping without knowing Kathmandu staff on a first-name basis. Truthfully, I can barely set up a tent without assistance – but I'll still sing the praises of this activity any dang day.

Firstly, camping happens outdoors. (If this is news to you, please google 'camping' before reading on.) It's been proven that humans need access to nature, green spaces and fresh air for our physical and psychological health. Camping is a surefire way to immerse yourself in all of the great outdoors quickly and easily. OK, now that the boring 'it's scientifically really, really good for your mind, body and soul' thing is out of the way, allow me to proceed into the fun bits.

Being away from the world is the perfect excuse to act completely bonkers. It's the ideal environment – and/or excuse – to unleash your inner child. Run around! Climb a tree! Piss outside! Imitate a gibbon! Make weird hooting sounds! As long as you're respecting your surroundings and abiding by the cardinal 'Leave No Trace' rule, camping allows us to be completely free in a way that we don't often have the opportunity to experience.

Even the worst camping experience ends up being fun. Well, not the *very* worst (like if you break both legs while being bitten by snakes) but here's an example. I once spent a week camping with friends and it rained heavily every day. Mud entered every crevice; campfire plans were scrapped; all belongings were vaguely damp the entire time. But I realised I was still away with mates. We met similarly muddy groups at service stations and all we could do was laugh. During the brief moments between rain showers, we saw creeks and mountains and animals. Life is silly and mud can be washed off.

Another benefit of camping is that it can look however you want it to – from glamping and shower blocks to a swag and self-dug poop hole. Camping is meant to be kinda dirty and simple, but I'm no purist. If someone wants to set up a deluxe tent that is essentially a pop-up cabin with a blow-up mattress, portaloo and one million chargers so they can watch *Drag Race* in the evenings, go for it! You do you! I'll be in my poorly assembled tent, attempting to read a book in the dark. There's no right or wrong way to do it.

Camping is one of those activities that some of us don't appreciate until we're older, and that's OK. Part of the reason I've become such an enthusiast about it is *because* I hated it as a child. Personalities and interests are often discussed in concrete, binary ways: you're either outdoorsy or you're not. You're either a constantly online individual or a chronically offline little freak – sorry, person.

But we aren't really like that! We contain multitudes! You don't have to push your mind and body to the extremes of Reese Witherspoon in *Wild* to benefit from camping. Just grab a tent and your inner child and I guarantee you'll have fun. And even if everything goes wrong, at least you'll come back with a good story.

Illustrations Caitlyn Bendall

SQUAWK SQUAWK
CAMP-ING 101
CHAPTER 1 HAVING FUN

LEAVE ME INDOORS BY JACK VENING

Every once in a while, just as everyone's starting to forget how heinous an activity it is, someone in the group chat will suggest it's time to go camping. You know this person – maybe you *are* this person, in which case I invite you to ask yourself what the fuck you think you're doing.

I have sympathy for this position, though the naivety of it is staggering. Sure, camping *sounds* great. A little household robot that can sense when I've read too many horror movie synopses on Wikipedia and immediately injects me in the neck with diazepam *sounds* great. But it's a long way off from reality.

Most of what passes for recreational camping is an act of the spiritually lost. We think of it as a return to the wild, but in truth it almost always occurs at a caravan park or campground. Were you expecting a weekend amid generous natural vistas and life-affirming birdsong? Well good news, here's a large patch of the wettest ground you've ever felt surrounding the world's most alarming public toilet. You wouldn't keep a prisoner in these conditions.

This is where you sleep: a government testing site for how damp you can make a single piece of earth without having to classify it as protected wetlands. Hope you brought every pair of socks you own and kept them in a vacuum-sealed NASA pod designed to survive space-shuttle explosions. Congratulations, they're still wet somehow!

The neighbours are either freakishly angry school-holiday parents and their pre-miserable kids, or menacing grey nomads who have spent so long in a caravan that they can now only interact with other humans from a position of direct hostility, like post-apocalyptic wasteland scavengers. It's the perfect environment to visit with your friends!

Of course, you could avoid the caravan park altogether and get to the real camping – the kind it'd actually be worth making a TikTok about. This is what most people are really imagining when they suggest going camping. If you do this, your chances of dying go up dramatically.

If you thought it was bad weathering Australia's flop-era climate in an overpriced campground with a no-glass policy and a school bus full of the ugliest children you've ever seen, just wait until you're doing it somewhere with zero reception and the environmental conditions to kill you *very easily*.

The modern Australian environment has become one without a regular 'nice' period to bet on more than a day in advance. Summer is a toaster oven, spring is now Winter 2, and Winter 1 shouldn't even be an option for camping unless you live in the tropical north, where winter is something invented by Netflix.

The times it's actually possible to predict the weather, it's because the ingredients are apocalyptic: once-in-a-century floods (every one or two years), gale-force winds easily strong enough to carry away a child or the smallest member of your group, a summer atmosphere so primed for inferno that you can't whisper without the static electricity from your lips triggering a spot fire that'll swell to the size of Belgium and land you on the news.

That's the reality of it: the land is self-destructing around you, the supplies cost a mortgage, the tent hasn't been cleaned in a year, one of your friends will end up taking something and crying uncontrollably or disappearing into the bush, the cool friends will be too busy to come and the annoying ones will be front and centre.

And if you manage to avoid all that – if you are blessed by the weather, if you've escaped the caravan park and managed to put together the most picturesque, most secluded, most BeReal-ass camping weekend imaginable – you'll just get *Wolf Creek'd* by the first rural serial killer lucky enough to spot your fire. Have fun! ✽

something to believe in

IN THEIR NEW ALBUM 'JESUS AT THE GAY BAR', CUB SPORT COMBINES HEARTFELT LYRICS WITH EUPHORIC BEATS.

Words **Tara Kenny**

Cub Sport's Tim Nelson is no stranger to inward journeying. As the band's lead singer and songwriter, he's penned four albums that chronicle the winding path to self-acceptance, laying bare his attempts to unlearn the shame around sexuality and gender that hark back to his Pentecostal Christian upbringing.

After coming out in 2016, Tim identified as an atheist. Since then, he's married his long-time love and bandmate Sam Netterfield and written Cub Sport's 2020 album, *Like Nirvana*, which was rich with religious themes. He's now "more open to believing in something", continuing his exploration of faith in the band's forthcoming album, *Jesus at the Gay Bar*.

The record borrows its name from a Jay Hulme poem that details an encounter between Jesus – who happens to be partying at a gay bar – and a young queer man who approaches him and attempts to touch his robes to be healed. Jesus responds: "my beautiful child / there is nothing in this heart of yours / that ever needs to be healed". "That resonated in a big way for me. I felt like it really captured the whole journey," says Tim, who now feels strongly about connecting with religion on his own terms. "It feels like making peace with it; reclaiming and reframing it to be something that isn't hurtful, which is kind of the opposite of what I grew up with."

Of course, gay bars are often joyous spaces filled with music, dancing and general revelry; an energy that Cub Sport have captured and bottled in *Jesus at the Gay Bar*. While the lyrics are as raw and vulnerable as the band's previous albums, the production sees them lean in to a new era of lightness and

Photo James Caswell

euphoria. "I wanted it to have heart and emotion, and for the lyrics to have that same feeling that's been the thread that's connected each era of Cub Sport. But sonically, I wanted it to give the listener energy," Tim explains.

The few shows that Cub Sport played back in 2020, when their album *Like Nirvana* came out, were socially distanced, seated affairs that matched the music's sombre and heartfelt tone. For Tim, performing that album during a period of collective struggle was "powerful and really beautiful", but also underpinned by "a lot of sadness". During one show in Adelaide, the energy palpably shifted when the band played "Sometimes", an invigorating pop anthem from their self-titled 2019 album. "There were people up on the tables – all separated, but so much energy – and it reminded me how powerful it is to have those energetic moments and to all be together," Tim recalls.

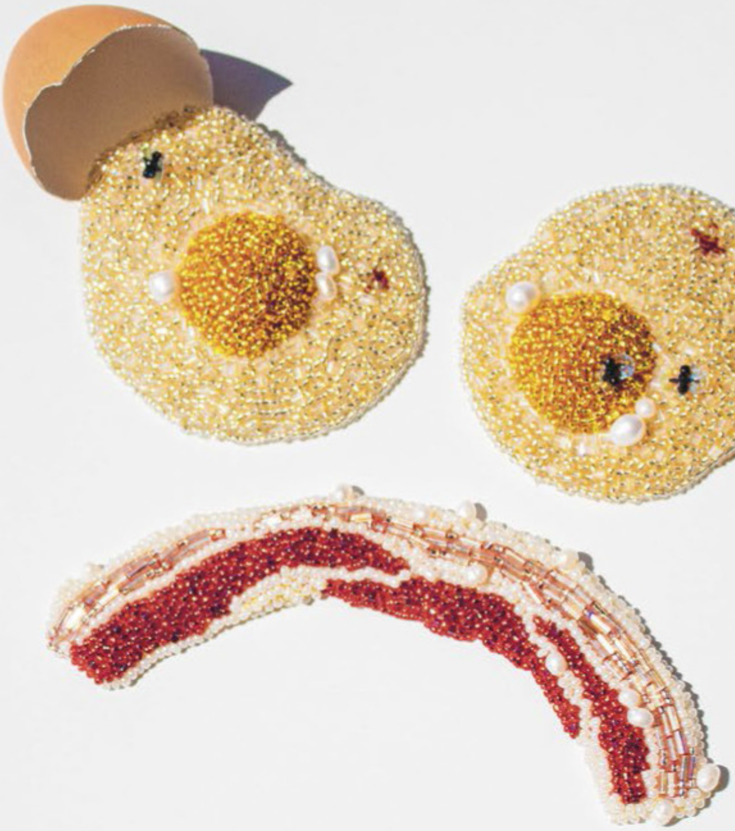
A desire to facilitate more moments of collective release informed the tone of *Jesus at the Gay Bar*. "I want to celebrate, rather than revisit the trauma of experiences, and look at the beautiful parts that feel good," Tim says. That intent shines through in tracks such as "Always Got the Love", "Replay" and "Songs About It", a dancefloor bop where Tim gushes about the thrill of allowing yourself to fully submit to new love: "Blow off all of my friends / 'Cos I don't want this to end / Ignoring every phone call / You're bringing all of my walls down".

Between the release of the album and Cub Sport's upcoming national and world tours, Tim, Sam and their bandmates Zoe Davis and Dan Puusaari are experiencing a level of success that is rare for any band, let alone a self-managed act from Brisbane. Yet Tim, who went to school with Sam and Zoe, is just as eager to talk about the everyday, personal victories that once felt unimaginable. "We've been in the north side of Brisbane basically our whole lives," he says. "It's pretty cool: Sam and I walking into the same supermarket that I used to go to when I was a kid and now we're holding hands. When I was little my worst nightmare was anyone finding out I was gay."

Given Tim and Sam's love story is central to the group's music and broader fan universe, is it ever challenging for them to merge their personal and professional lives so wholly? According to Tim, being joined at the hip is the easy part: "We choose to spend basically every moment of every day together and we're always talking. We've started to develop a telepathic connection; so often one of us will say something and the other will be like, 'I was just thinking the same exact thing.'"

After eight years of wanting to be together but feeling like they had to hide, the pair are profoundly grateful for their creative and romantic partnership. "We've been best friends for 14 years now and together for six years, but in love basically the whole time," Tim continues. Through Cub Sport, they're not only making music with their mates, but fostering and celebrating previously hidden parts of themselves and inspiring others to do the same. "It's a really special, rare thing."

Jesus at the Gay Bar *is out on April 7th.* ✽



Unhappy Meal (2022) hand embroidered soft sculpture

softly sculpted

MEET CARLY OWENS AND HER HAND-EMBROIDERED, BEADED TREASURES.

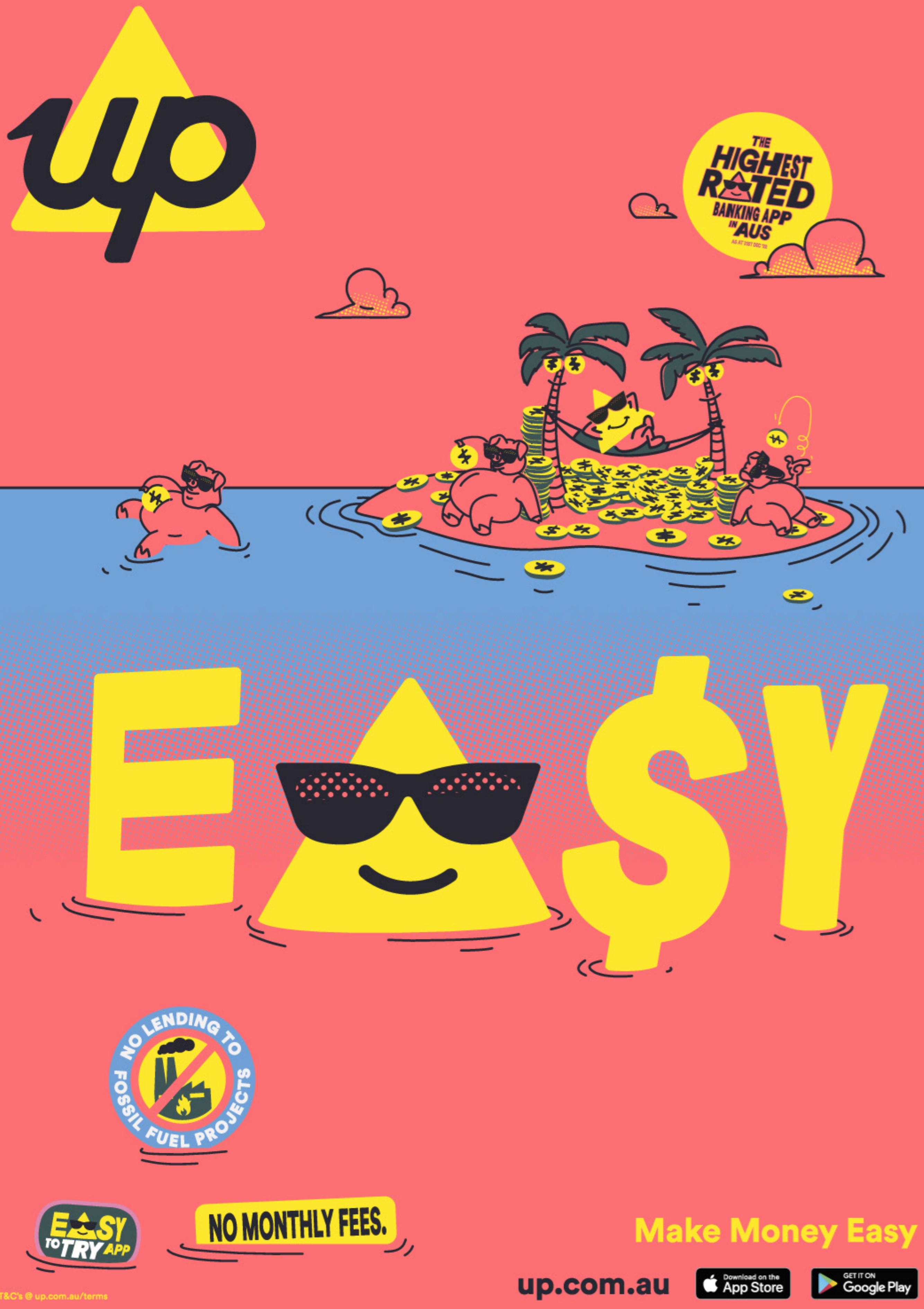
My creative process has always been thoughtful, meticulous and detail-oriented, so when I was introduced to embroidery, it felt like I finally found a medium that complemented my style.

I studied art and design at university and was offered to study abroad for a summer at the Royal School of Needlework in the UK. This was my technical introduction to hand embroidery, and I was taught Jacobean crewelwork and goldwork embroidery – very old and traditional techniques. I now use these techniques in contemporary contexts as vehicles for my own visual language.

My food series began from my obsession with the egg as a motif. I found an empty robin's nest and blue eggshells scattered on the lawn outside of my studio one day. I wasn't sure if I was witnessing the remnants of something joyful or tragic – had the eggs hatched or had they been invaded? I began feeling a sort of kinship with the egg, and drawing parallels between it and experiences within my own body.

I find myself wanting to champion embroidery more and more – it is still incredibly gendered and stigmatised as 'women's work'. I want to show that embroidery is just as effective at conveying ideas as any other art form. And although I'm tackling complex and sometimes political themes, I try not to let that dominate the work. Humour is so important. You have to laugh in life, because otherwise you'll cry.

See more from Carly online at carlyelizabethowens.com or on Instagram at @carlyowensweiss. ✽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